Rādhā-Hṛdaya Khanda

Brahmanda Purana

Uttara Khanda

Translator's / Editor's Prefatory Statement

Sri Gurubhyo Namah.

Among the **eighteen Mahāpurāṇas** composed by the great sage **Vedavyāsa**, the **Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa** is extremely profound, most secret, and filled with wondrous and sublime esoteric teachings. Having churned the **four Vedas**, the essential nectar of the Purāṇas has been compiled into this work.

This Purāṇa is divided into **two sections—Pūrva-khaṇḍa and Uttara-khaṇḍa**, and consists of **ten thousand verses**. Hearing or reciting it bestows incomparable liberation. It is supremely pure, wholly devoted to the glorification of the qualities of Bhagavān, and is the highest giver of ultimate auspiciousness. It cleanses the minds of people afflicted by the impurities of the Kali age and brings deep inner satisfaction. Profound and marvelous Purāṇic truths are explained herein.

The **speaker, listener, and subject**—all three—derive joy from this Purāṇa, and doubts are dispelled.
In the **Pūrva-khaṇḍa**, through abundant descriptions of divine pastimes, aesthetic expressions, graceful dances, sweet streams of rasa, music, and Purāṇic narration, the listener's mind becomes filled with immeasurable joy.

Within it is contained the **Rāma-hṛdaya**, consisting of **four thousand verses**, known as the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, narrating the divine pastimes of **Śrī Rāmacandra**. Included therein is also the **Rāma-gītā**, hearing which bestows the same fruit as listening to Vedānta itself, namely liberation. Such a venerable Purāṇa is cherished only by the fortunate.

In the **Uttara-khaṇḍa**, the liberating section known as **Rādhā-hṛdaya** is elaborately described. Therein, the appearance and divine pastimes of **Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa** are narrated, and the glory of **Śrī Rādhikā**, the supreme primal energy (*Ādyā-śakti*), is expounded in great detail. Like a blazing sun, this excellent Purāṇa dispels the inner darkness of the world.

Now I humbly pray before saints, discerning scholars, and wise intellectuals:

If, within this work composed by one of limited knowledge, any defect in meaning, ornamentation, language, or arrangement of letters is discovered, please kindly forgive me.I shall gladly accept such correction as a blessing, for through it I may learn to avoid faults in the future. If this work serves to increase devotion in the hearts of its readers, may all praise be attributed to Sri Radhika, who is Mahamaya, and who is Herself the Supreme Brahman - the imperishable, endless. She is Herself the ananda residing in the hearts of all beings, their true supreme state.

Therefore, O venerable readers, please extend your compassion toward me.

NOTE

The existing manuscript ends without the Gopis' being able to recover their goods and they are left pondering about what can be done about their kinsmen when they discover this mishap of theirs - this takes place after the incident of Krishna's healing and subsequent restoration of Sri Radha's reputation and honour.

It has nevertheless been included for the pleasure of the devotees who enjoy the rasa of the dalliances of Krishna with Radha and the gopis.

Following are the chapters which are supposed to follow the incomplete episode, which has been attached to the text being referred to for this translation:

1. Śrī Kṛṣṇa relieving the burden of the Gopīs
2. Description of Rāsa-maṇḍala
3. Complete description of Rāsa-līlā
4. Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs
5. Description of Śrī Rādhikā's pain in separation
6. Bestowal of blessings by Rādhikā
7. Final union of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhikā
8. Liberation of the Gopīs

The reader is advised to look at Garga-Samhita, a complete work dealing with both Radha's and Krishna's lives right from their births, to the point of the Lord's ascent back to his highest abode from this world following which Kali begins. This samhita contains all incidents mentioned missing in this work.

The original Mahapurana's numbering of chapters is different from the one used in this text. This does not, however, mean the omitting of the content of the original in any means whatsoever. The translation has stayed as faithful as possible to the original.

Stutis, mantras, dhyanas and kavachas mentioned in the original text have been appended at the end for the benefit of the upasakas and curious readers.

Pranams.

Chapter One: The Description of the Pralaya

Om. Salutations to Gaṇeśa.

At the outset, the great sage Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, foremost among seers, desiring the removal of all obstacles to the composition of this work, performs an auspicious invocation by remembering Gaṇapati.

He says:

I adore that venerable Lord who is without equal, the sovereign of countless universes, known to the masters of Vedānta; who shines forth as Brahman, resplendent like the radiance of the sun; who is the supreme among beings, the all-pervading Supreme Lord, the indwelling ruler of all; who is the hidden cause of the creation, preservation, and dissolution of the universe. To that destroyer of all obstacles, I offer my worship.

I worship that primordial Supreme Person from whose navel-water the lotus was born; upon which appeared the lotus-born Brahmā, who, contemplating all the worlds with their beings, abides in unceasing penance for the purpose of creation; that stainless, eternal, and praiseworthy Lord, the foremost of all beings.

In the sacred region of Naimiśāraṇya, Śaunaka and other sages, numbering a thousand, having completed a twelve-year sacrificial observance, were resting with minds wearied by austerity. At that time, Sūta, the son of Romaharṣaṇa, arrived there. The sages respectfully offered him a seat and, with due reverence, began to inquire of him concerning the divine truths of the Supreme Lord.

Śaunaka said:

“Well spoken, well spoken, O venerable one! Excellent indeed is what you have spoken to us. By answering our questions in the proper sequence, you have completely cut through all our doubts.”

“Free me from the bondage of doubt by your words. In this world there is no other speaker equal to you, no other person who can dispel uncertainty so completely. I am bound by a great chain in the form of doubt; with the sword of your speech, cut this bond and release us.”

“Having fallen into the boundless and dreadful ocean of worldly existence, we are being tossed about by countless waves. O Sūta, by words imbued with the virtues of Vāsudeva, it is fitting that you rescue us and lift us out of this ocean of becoming.”

“Revive us, who are as good as dead from the torment of worldly suffering, O Sūta, by the nectar-like essence of divine discourse.”

“O son of Romaharṣaṇa, O Sūta! Across this fearful ocean of existence, lead us to the farther shore by the boat of the glorious narratives of the great deeds of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, sung in due order and harmonious progression.”

Sūta said:

“O best among speakers, your words are supremely worthy. By immersing us in the nectar-like speech that is the sacred narrative of Hari, you have purified us all.”

Śaunaka said:

“O dear one, by narrating the supremely auspicious and purifying stories devoted to Bhagavān Vāsudeva, you have fulfilled us in the highest manner. Yet our satisfaction does not come to completion. Even while drinking the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divine pastimes, our hearts do not find repose. Rather, our minds continue to waver, and our thirst for that nectar of sacred discourse increases exceedingly.”

“O revered one, you previously described Vāsudeva as without attributes, yet the very essence of all attributes, untouched, ever blissful, and of pure consciousness. Why, then, did that Supreme Lord perform austerities in ancient times? For what reason was such penance necessary for Him?”

“You have repeatedly declared Hari to be the Supreme Reality beyond all else. For whose sake did He practice austerity, and what did He gain by it? In what place did He reside while performing that discipline? Please tell us.”

“O venerable sage, why did that attributeless Supreme Being assume attributes? Why did He, though ever untouched, appear as though bound by qualities? And how did that all-pervading Lord of the universe come to manifest in embodied form?”

“That Hari from whose innumerable fractions arise Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, who are engaged in the creation, preservation, and dissolution of the worlds for the welfare of the universe—”

“That infinite Lord who is the master of countless crores of universes, from whom arise innumerable creators of worlds, and from whose infinitesimal portions are born the mighty guardians of the worlds—”

“From whose innumerable infinitesimal portions arise all realms together with humankind, and by the opening of whose eyes the entire universe comes into manifestation.”

“And by the closing of whose eyes the universe together with gods and humans enters dissolution. By His own power, that powerful Supreme Person Nārāyaṇa continually performs the divine play of creation, preservation, and destruction.”

“O illustrious sage, cut this rope of doubt that binds our hearts by the sword of your words.”

“O Sūta, you are the foremost among all speakers. If you bear compassion toward us and deem it proper to speak, then, relying upon the sacred discourse of Vāsudeva, explain these matters clearly to us.”

Sūta said:

“Bow I to that sage whom some, seeing his dark complexion, call Kṛṣṇa; whom others, knowing his lineage, call the son of Satyavatī; who was obtained as the son of the great sage Parāśara by the power of austerity; who is worshipped by gods and sages alike; that most venerable of sages, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana.”

“I adore him who divided the Vedas into four along with their true meaning, who attained the name Vyāsa, who is the foremost among poets, and who is the radiant sun that causes the lotus of the Vedas and Vedānta to bloom—him, the son of Satyavatī.”

“Well done, well done, O venerable one. By your noble words Hari has been remembered, and my mind, absorbed in contemplation, has passed time

meaningfully. Indeed, without the company of the virtuous, the narration of Hari cannot bring fulfillment."

"For those afflicted by the sufferings of worldly existence, this discourse is the supreme elixir. Listen attentively, for I shall narrate, just as it was spoken by Romaharṣaṇa, through the grace of Vyāsa."

"Once, the illustrious Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, whose form was dark, radiant, and exceedingly resplendent, whose body shone like blazing fire, whose presence inspired awe, and who was devoted to Kṛṣṇa, sat upon the bank of the river Sarasvatī, surrounded by great sages."

"With him were Paila, Vaiśampāyana, Garga, Jaimini, and Gautama. At that time my father Romaharṣaṇa approached. Having offered his obeisance, he stood respectfully, desiring the welfare of the world."

Romaharṣaṇa said:

With great humility Romaharṣaṇa addressed Vedavyāsa and said:
"O Pārāśarya, son of Parāśara, O mahābhāga, O mahāyogin, O foremost among yogins, O mahākavi, greatest among poets—whatever profound truths are imparted by a teacher to a disciple who listens with sincere devotion, even if conveyed secretly, are declared by the gods themselves to be the very source of knowledge. Therefore such a one is rightly called 'guru'. This is the accepted understanding."

By your grace alone, O mahāyogin, I have repeatedly studied the Purāṇas together with the Itihāsas—texts that are not merely holy, but supremely purifying. Not only have I studied them again and again, but I have also directly experienced their fruit. This is my firm conviction.

Now, revered one, I desire to hear from you that nectar for the ears—the life-giving elixir for the heart—which you yourself once practiced and expounded: the sacred narrative known as *Sādhāṅga-dayā*.

O best of munis, I have already heard the exceedingly sweet account of *Madhurādhyāya*, consisting of eleven thousand verses, spoken within the

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa—an account in which the enchanting līlā of Rādhā is described and which delights and purifies the mind.

But now, O venerable one, there is something even more worthy of being heard: the supreme, most sacred, and deeply secret narrative known as *Radha-hridaya*—an account that destroys the impurities of all three times. Whether understood as removing sins committed in the past, present, and future, or as cleansing the faults arising at dawn, noon, and dusk, it is supremely purifying.

Therefore, O compassionate guru, I bow at your lotus feet. O svāmin, you are kind to the humble and compassionate toward the fallen. I am destitute and dependent—please show mercy to me.

Dvaipāyana said:

Moved by compassion upon hearing these words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa replied gently:

"O Sūta, your mind is truly devoted to Adhokṣaja Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Because such devotion has arisen within you, you are indeed worthy. You are disciplined, sincere, and surrendered; therefore I shall speak to you this secret teaching. Listen with full attention."

In a former kalpa, Mahāviṣṇu, reclining upon the endless serpent in the ocean of milk, imparted this *Radha-hridaya* to the lotus-born Brahmā.

Brahmā, desiring the welfare of his sons, taught it to the sages beginning with Atri. Those sages, having fully realized its meaning, transmitted it to me. Now I, in turn, bestow that same sacred knowledge upon you. Listen carefully and with a steady mind.

Having first offered obeisance to Nārāyaṇa, the supreme deva; to the self-manifest Lord; to Nanda-nandana, the son of Vasudeva; to Govinda, the radiant sun of the lotus-hearts of the gopīs; to the lotus-eyed one who awakens the kumuda flowers—I now begin to answer your question.

When Dharma foresaw the approach of Kali, the minds of the sages became distressed. Their hearts grew heavy with fear, and after their ritual baths their faces appeared darkened with anxiety.

Marīci, Atri, Pulastya, Aṅgiras, Kratu, Pulaha, and Vasiṣṭha—the seven munis—began to reflect anxiously: “What refuge remains for us now? To whom shall we turn?”

Wandering through the heavens and across all directions, unable to find peace or protection anywhere, they finally proceeded together to Satyaloka, the realm of Brahmā.

There they beheld Prajāpati Brahmā, the giver of fearlessness to all beings, seated upon his supreme throne. His face shone like a fully blossomed lotus, and his chest was embraced by Sarasvatī herself.

His long and beautiful arms extended gracefully, his face glowed with the brilliance of radiant earrings, and with his four lotus-faces he conversed gently with Sarasvatī.

His lotus feet were lovingly attended by munis such as Mārkaṇḍeya.

He was praised by devas, ṛṣis, gandharvas, vidyādharas, kinnaras, nāgas such as Vāsuki, apsarās, yakṣas, rākṣasa-lords, and by kings who had performed great sacrifices like Vājapeya and Aśvamedha.

He was served by beings of water, land, and forest; by peaceful ascetics; and by householders established in ahiṁsā and purity, whose minds were tranquil.

He was revered through the Vedas, Vedānta, Āgamas, Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇas, Itihāsa, Mīmāṁsā, and Jyotiḥśāstra—manifest in personal form as the grandfather of the universe.

That Brahmaloka was adorned with celestial wish-fulfilling trees, their steady shade and abundant blossoms filling the air with fragrant breezes that brought constant delight.

Illuminating the entire assembly hall with his own radiant tejas, Brahmā sat resplendent. The sages, joining their palms, bowed to the world-father and gradually began to explain the cause of their sorrow.

The Nature of the Age of Kali

“Most people will become consumed by greed and attachment, straying into sinful paths. Even the Brahmins, fallen from their sacred duties, will neglect the study of the Vedas. Almost all people will turn against their own parents.

Alienated from virtuous deeds, people will devote themselves entirely to commerce and agriculture. Truth will vanish as falsehood becomes the norm. Their only purpose will be the gratification of their appetites and the indulgence of their senses.

O Brahman, the Kshatriya class will mostly perish or abandon their code of conduct, losing all sense of purity. The Vaishyas, too, will forsake their inherent duties; instead of honest trade and farming, they will immerse themselves in unlawful pleasures and forbidden acts.

Shudras will take up the duties of Brahmins, mimicking their rituals and conduct. Those who hold the mantle of royalty will govern without regard for the scriptures. Some kings will behave like thieves toward their subjects, while others will use force and deceit to plunder the wealth of the people. Deception will be the hallmark of the ruling class.

The base and the ignoble will rise to great wealth, commanding armies and vast resources, and will be falsely honored as great souls. Within the home, daughters-in-law will harbor constant malice and resentment toward their parents-in-law.

Women, for the most part, will abandon the vows of devotion to their husbands, seeking instead to live according to their own whims. Fickle-minded and prone to sin, many will constantly seek the company of paramours.

O Lord, observing this downward spiral of humanity in the terrifying Age of Kali, we are filled with deep apprehension. O God of Gods! We have come to You for shelter; protect us from the terrors of this age.

In this dark era, righteousness and material prosperity are subverted. The world is being consumed by the ferocity of Kali. O Lord of the Devas, as virtue vanishes, we fear we are descending toward a wretched fate. Pray, grant us Your permission and reveal a way to prevent our downfall. O Lord, we bow to You once more; save us!”

The Consolation of Brahma

Dwaipayana said to Lomaharshana: "O son, hearing the desperate words of the self-realized sages, the lotus-born Brahma, with a heart softened by compassion, began to reassure them with steady and gentle words."

Brahma said: "Fear not, O tigers among twice-born sages! Do not fear the terrible Age of Kali. O Brahmins, there is no cause for sorrow for those who have surrendered their souls to Lord Vasudeva.

Worship the Lord of the Universe, Vasudeva, in His true essence. Remain ever-absorbed in hearing His glories and meditating upon His divine form. By contemplating His lotus feet, chanting His sacred names, and seeking the company of His devotees, you shall remain untouched by fear.

O leaders of the sages, wander freely as liberated souls, for there is no fear for you in this age. Why do you tremble when such a path to safety exists?"

Angiras said: "O Brahman! You have instructed us to worship Vasudeva. O noble one, best among speakers, who is this Vasudeva, the beloved of Lakshmi? What are His attributes, His form, and His divine works? Pray, enlighten us."

Dwaipayana said: "Hearing this question from the Brahmins, Brahma—the self-born—was overcome with a surge of devotion for the Lord. With his hair standing on end in spiritual ecstasy, he replied in a voice filled with grace."

Brahma said: "O noble ones, you have asked a question that brings welfare to the entire world. The inquiry into the glories of Vasudeva purifies three people: the one who asks, the one who listens, and the one who speaks—be they man or woman.

O Brahmins, the nectar-like stories of Lord Hari are as purifying as the Ganges is among rivers. By your question, I have been made holy, and in this auspicious moment, you too are purified by your inquiry.

I consider my life successful and my birth fulfilled. Having prostrated before the supreme state of Lord Vishnu, I shall now speak.

This knowledge of the Divine is the ultimate secret in this world, the protector of all humanity. It is a profound mystery rarely revealed, for it wipes away the sins gathered across the three periods of time. It fulfills all righteous desires, is supremely holy, and liberates one from all sins. There is nothing higher in this world, for it leads to the ultimate beatitude—Supreme Liberation.

O Brahmins, this is the supreme mystery known as the *Radha-Hridayam*. Long ago, when I desired to create the universe and sat upon the lotus in the lake of the Lord's navel, the Lord of the Devas, the infallible Achyuta, revealed this secret to me as I sought His protection.

By receiving just a tiny fragment of grace from the corner of His eye, I was able to create all these beings. Drink this nectar of supreme truth through your ears and attain that primordial bliss which ends all suffering.

Once you have heard these divine truths, you shall wander this earth—with its mountains, forests, oceans, heavens, and netherworlds—as freely as the wind moves through the sky, unobstructed and at peace."

The Primordial Nature

Brahma said: "O Brahmins, listen now with an attentive mind. When the Great Dissolution occurred, there existed only the ancient and primordial *Prakriti* (Nature). She is the root cause of all and the most excellent of all that is excellent.

She is composed of pure light, formless, and as radiant as ten million suns. From Her heart was first born Lord Vasudeva, the ocean of mercy, also known as Narayana."

That Being from whom this entire world, composed of both the manifest and the unmanifest, is born—and in whom it is finally dissolved—is the same One who sustains this entire universe.

From Her own body, the Primordial Nature (*Prakriti*) brought forth Vasudeva and then bestowed upon Him a consort, also named Kamala, born of Her own essence."

Angiras said: "O Brahma! How did that formless Soul and Nature take on a form? How does this universe dissolve, and by whose will is it manifested again? The beings of this world, consisting of both truth and untruth, seem bound to their own affairs. If You have mercy upon us, pray - describe these causes in detail."

Brahma said: "O noble one! You have asked an excellent question for the welfare of the world and for the protection of the soul from the evils of the Kali Age. Therefore, listen with care.

A cycle of four ages—*Satya*, *Treta*, *Dvapara*, and *Kali*—constitutes one *Divya Yuga*. Seventy-one such *Divya Yugas* make a *Manvantara*. The period spanning fourteen *Manvantaras* is known as a *Kalpa*. At the end of a *Kalpa*, a partial dissolution (*Khanda-Pralaya*) occurs. After three such partial dissolutions, a Great Dissolution (*Maha-Pralaya*) takes place.

There are four types of dissolution: the *Nitya* (daily dissolution at the end of Brahma's day), the *Naimittika* (occasional dissolution due to specific causes), the *Prakritika* (natural dissolution when Brahma's lifespan half-concludes and he merges into Nature), and the *Atyantika* (the absolute or Great Dissolution when the Primordial Nature herself reaches a state of equilibrium).

O Brahmins! I shall now describe to you the manner in which this dissolution occurs, exactly as I heard it from the mouth of Lord Narayana. Listen with a concentrated mind.

By His own will and meditation, Narayana created the four orders—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. Through their mutual intermingling, thirty-six further castes were produced. Thereafter, Lord Vishnu, the supreme master of all worlds, established the codes of conduct and the hierarchy for these castes, including those of mixed origin, ranging from the highest to the lowest.

In the Age of Kali, these castes will further fracture into hundreds of degraded sub-groups. Brahmins will take on the appearance of barbarians (*Yavanas*), while barbarians and others will become devoted to theft.

Brahma said: "People will speak in foreign tongues and abandon the hardships of penance and virtue. The Kshatriya class will mostly perish, and the Vaishya class will dwindle toward extinction. Shudras, having forsaken their own duties, will mimic the rituals of Brahmins; they will become critics of the learned, while both kings and commoners will plunder the wealth of the priestly class.

Shudras and others, driven by lust, will wander like rutting elephants, seeking the company of Brahmin women with no regard for right or wrong. They will harbor malice toward the gods and become godless, deceitful, and heretical.

Evil and ignorant men, skilled in hollow arguments, will constantly ask: 'What is religion? Who is God? What is the purpose of ritual?' Most will be devoted to the persecution of the Vedas and the Brahmins. All classes, starting with the Brahmins, will indulge in forbidden relations and consume any kind of food. Pure conduct and dietary discipline will vanish as all sink into sin.

Losing all sense of cleanliness and ritual purity, people will wander like crows, feeding on the remains of others. All castes, including the Brahmins, will be obsessed only with filling their own bellies; the sacred duty of hospitality will be nearly uprooted.

Who will not seize another man’s devoted wife by force? Thus, the people, mired in the confusion of castes and shrouded in the darkest ignorance, will be driven by their base nature to perform evil deeds.

Ignorant men will wander the earth making sounds like animals, their speech devoid of any spiritual meaning. Childhood will last only four years, and the stage

of early youth will end by the seventh year. Youth itself will flourish after the seventh year, and by sixteen, one will reach old age; within twenty years, most will face death. Girls of eight, nine, or ten years shall be wedded to men.

Women will bear children at the very onset of their youth, and many will conceive and give birth outside the bonds of marriage, following their whims without regard for tradition.

O Brahmins! In this terrible age, sons will harbor hatred for their parents, and people will turn against their teachers and kin. Parents will despise their sons, and gurus will be at odds with their disciples.

Unnatural births will occur: donkeys will be born from cows, and cows from donkeys or humans. Horses will give birth to cows and buffaloes, and at times, humans will be born from the wombs of cows or horses. The winds will not blow in the proper season, or they will blow fiercely when not required. The clouds will not pour rain when needed, and will flood the earth when it is least expected."

Brahma said: "The winds will not blow at the proper time, or they will blow with violent force when not required. Clouds will not rain in season, yet it will rain incessantly out of season. In short, nature will act only in ways that cause the depletion and ruin of all subjects.

Trees will become devoid of fruit, and flowers will lose their fragrance. Cows will yield no milk, and all succulent things will lose their sweetness. Indeed, no object that brings serenity to the mind shall remain.

Fruits, roots, and dairy products like curd, milk, and ghee—as well as crops like paddy, mung bean, lentil, vetch, barley, and wheat—all shall lose their essence. Even staples like sesame, fish, and meat will become tasteless and odorless. All substances that once possessed fragrance will become as scentless as common matter.

The earth will become barren of grain. Humans, afflicted by extreme hunger and thirst, will lose the distinction between the pure and the impure; they will go so far as to consume the forbidden flesh of their own kind.

When the end of the age arrives in this manner, all worldly activities will cease. In the infinite millions of universes, the lotus-born Creators—the Brahmas of every realm—shall go to their rest.

Beholding the world as a mere abode of grief—lawless, agitated, and filled with dread—the Four-faced Creators of all these universes will become deeply distressed. Seeing the arrival of the Great Dissolution and the collapse of all moral order, they will cry out in despair and become utterly overwhelmed.

O Sages! The twelve suns—known as Aditya, Savita, Surya, Khaga, Pusha, Gabhastiman, Tamisraha, Bhaga, Hansa, Nasatya, Tamosuda, and Sahasrangshu—shall all rise at once in the sky by the will of that inconceivable Supreme Lord.

Their rays, sharp and fierce like blazing fires, will rise simultaneously to consume cities, villages, forts, gates, and palaces. They will thoroughly parch the oceans, forests, and all living beings with their searing heat, as if the solar forms were breathing out actual fire.

Thereupon, the entire world—with its parched inhabitants, its mountains, islands, and cities—shall be scorched. The realms of the Devas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kinnaras, Pannagas, Nagas, Uragas, Pisachas, Rakshasas, and Siddhas will all be engulfed.

A terrifying fire, the very form of Rudra, will manifest. It will envelop the earth, the sky, the heavens, and every direction, rising as a great and formidable flame. Driven by the wind, its companion, that fierce fire will crackle with a 'chata-chata' sound, burning all the aforementioned realms with its intense radiance.

Combined with the wind, this great fire will reduce the entire universe—including gods and men—to ashes. All forests, living beings, and oceans will be turned to dust. Having consumed all creatures of land and water, the fire will climb toward the realm of Indra, burning the celestial cities along with the mountains and islands of the earth.

That great fire, further inciting the winds to a fury, will enter the highest heavens. Infused with the power of Rudra, the wind will become the

'Samvartaka'—characterized by terrifying speed and a thunderous roar. It will unify the entire universe, from the highest heavens to the lowest depths, into a single mass of ruin.

Finally, that wind, taking the form of Ananta and carrying the essence of all beings, will enter the waters. And those waters shall ultimately merge back into Me. In this manner, in every universe, all things will be dissolved back into their respective Brahmas.

When all objects have entered those respective Brahmas, those Creators—including myself—will have completed their tasks. Then, I and all others like me shall enter the Supreme Brahman.

Listen now to the nature of that Supreme Brahman:

The entire universe will be drawn by the Divine Energy into the Supreme Brahman, Lord Narayana—the Lord of Devas who rests upon the couch of the serpent-king Ananta. Along with all energies, all living beings, the foremost Devas, the Asuras, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, and Apsaras; along with the Nagas, Uragas, Pisachas, Vidyadharas, great Sages, Siddhas, Charanas, Devarshis, and Rajarshis; and even the Vetals, birds, Kushmandas, Dakinis, Putanas, Nakshatras, Grahas, and Ganas—all shall be gathered.

O Brahmins! Guided by the Great Power of the Lord, all these beings will enter that Formless, Supreme Brahman. In that state, millions of universes remain suspended within the pores of the Lord's skin like tiny grains of dust.

Infinite millions of universes reside within the vast body of that boundless Supreme Soul, Narayana. In every universe, amidst countless oceans, numerous serpent-beds (Ananta Shesha) are spread out with pillows, upon which dwell the myriad glorious forms of Lord Vishnu, self-luminous and radiant as ten million suns.

Within that singular great ocean, the Supreme Lord rests in a form like that of a small infant, known as the Virat-rupa. At that time, the Lord of Lords is served with great devotion by His supreme energies, led by Radha.

These supreme powers, led by Radha, are the highest of all. This primal nature, Radha, is infinitesimally subtle, the deluder of the universe, and the very embodiment of consciousness and wisdom. Appearing as a formless light and devoid of all material transformations, she roams repeatedly across the waters of the causal ocean."

Thus ends the first chapter, titled "The Description of the Great Dissolution," in the dialogue between Brahma and the Seven Sages, from the Radha-Hridayam of the Uttara-Khanda of the Brahmanda Purana, within the Paramahamsa Samhita composed by Vyasa.

Chapter Two: The Description of Creation

Brahma said: "O child Angiras! For hundreds and thousands of years, that divine primal nature, Radha—the embodiment of brilliance—traversed the void, a self-sustaining light without any external support.

Desiring to create, that unborn Radha assumed a physical form of exquisite tenderness, appearing as a woman of incomparable beauty in every limb. From her own heart, she then brought forth a Great Being of vast deeds and infinite strides, who dwells within all.

This child appeared to be the size of a thumb's joint, yet his brilliance surpassed that of ten million suns. Immediately upon his appearance, Radha commanded him, 'Create!' and in an instant, she vanished from sight.

Witnessing this supreme and wondrous form, which felt like a dream, the immeasurable Soul began to wonder: 'What is my duty now? Who was this beautifully formed Nature? Whence did she come, and why did she disappear after simply commanding me to create?' Deeply contemplative, he began to look in all four directions.

In those primal waters, he suddenly beheld a single leaf of a Peepal (Ashvattha) tree floating. Seeing this, he steadied his body through his own great power and ascended that Peepal leaf to take his station. O Brahman! Like a sleeping child, he

remained upon that floating leaf, drifting for some time upon the waters of the great ocean."

The Sages said: "O Lord! O Brahma! We have heard previously that the great sage Markandeya, who has lived through seven cycles of creation and dissolution, was present during that great deluge. Where did he stay at that time, and how did he find liberation?

You have mentioned nothing of this, and a great doubt has arisen in our minds. Therefore, O broad-minded Brahman, pray - describe to us in detail the magnificent deeds of Markandeya during that time."

Brahma said: "Listen. Fallen into the waters of the causal ocean, that best of sages, the wise son of Mukantha, was sometimes submerged and sometimes tossed upon the waves. Exhausted and on the verge of death, he felt his life force fading.

In his helplessness, the sage Markandeya began to offer hymns of praise to the resplendent Lord Vishnu, the performer of vast and heroic deeds."

Markandeya said: "I bow to Him who is the protector of the waters and the sun that illuminates the lotus. Salutations to Him from whose navel the lotus is born and whose face is as beautiful as a blooming lotus. I bow again and again to the radiant Lord Hrishikesha, the master of the senses, the Lord of the Gopis, and the Paramahamsa who resides in the hearts of the pure."

Brahma said: "O Sages! As the muni was thus offering his prayers, a child—shining like ten million suns and measuring only the size of a thumb's joint—appeared before him. Seated upon the Peepal leaf, the child smiled and spoke to the sage.

The Lord said: 'O child! You have lived through seven dissolutions; you should not fear. Come to me, for I shall hold you, and you shall be protected from the terror that has gripped you.'

Hearing the words of the child resting on the leaf, the great sage Markandeya laughed in disbelief. The sage thought to himself: 'This person is the size of a

thumb and lies upon a mere leaf. How is it possible for him to protect me in this great dissolution?' Thinking thus, he viewed the child's words as a jest.

Knowing the thoughts of the sage, Lord Madhusudana, the Knower of all hearts, spoke to him in a voice as deep as the rumbling of clouds, offering these words of justice.

Vasudeva said: 'Welcome, O best of Brahmins! Your intellect is indeed vast. It is only fitting that you should find cause to laugh even at the Lord of Lords.'"

"Do not think thus. I am the Lord of all lords. Is it fitting for you to treat my words with such ridicule?"

Brahma said: "O Sages, having heard those truthful and beneficial words from the Great-Souled Narayana, Markandeya did not accept them as wholesome guidance at first, yet he gradually drew closer to Him.

Then, the great sage Markandeya stepped onto that Peepal leaf with ease. However, due to the Lord's unfathomable glory, he could not comprehend the true dimensions of that leaf, nor could he fathom the true scale of that infant's form.

Thereafter, Markandeya exerted his strength to press his own thumb upon the Peepal leaf. When he could not take its measure even then, his eyes widened in supreme wonder. He remained staring with unblinking eyes, thinking to himself in amazement, 'Alas! What is this?'

Ascending that Peepal leaf, the sage began to breathe heavily, like a serpent inside a hole. Then, reassured by the comforting words of the Lord, he sat down upon that leaf.

Sitting upon the Peepal leaf, Markandeya began to contemplate: 'The Maya of this Lord of Lords, Narayana, is the deluder of the entire universe. I am but a mortal of limited intellect; it is impossible for me to comprehend it. Human effort cannot fathom the Divine Illusion.'

Even the celestial beings are deluded by His Maya, and the Great Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—remain under its influence.

As he was contemplating the Divine Maya, Markandeya was impelled by the Lord's will and, by the force of that Divine Power, he was drawn into the belly of the infant-formed Lord.

Upon entering the Lord's belly, Markandeya beheld millions of universes, all brilliantly manifest, residing within every single pore of His skin.

In those infinite millions of universes, he saw countless Brahmas, countless Vishnus, and countless Shivas. He saw infinite Indras, Moons, Planets, Suns, Vasus, and the twin Ashwini Kumaras.

He saw millions of Yakshas, Rakshasas, Vetals, Kushmandas, Uragas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas, Asuras, Siddhas, Charanas, and Pisachas dwelling there.

He beheld all the kings, sages, mountains, and lakes; all the oceans, sky-dwellers, and thousands upon thousands of Nagas and Naga-maidens wandering there.

Furthermore, he saw herds of millions of goats, sheep, cows, buffaloes, camels, and donkeys, along with bears, tigers, boars, hyenas, and various species of deer roaming about.

In every universe, there were Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, and people of mixed castes. He saw all types of vehicles and mounts, as well as every variety of weapon and scripture.

He saw magnificent cities, palaces, and gardens; and hundreds of thousands of horses, elephants, and chariots stationed in various places.

Everything was arranged according to its age, nature, location, strength, power, and enthusiasm, perfectly ordered within the belly of the Virat.

The wise Markandeya wandered through that belly—upwards and downwards like the wind—becoming utterly exhausted and dejected. His mind became agitated with hunger, and he grew desperate for food.

Because he was immersed in the Lord's being, Markandeya could not perceive that a dissolution had occurred; he saw the world exactly as it had been before. However, he could find nothing to eat, drink, or consume.

After wandering like a madman through those thousands of universes, by the Lord's will, Markandeya suddenly emerged from the Lord's belly. At that moment, he saw nothing but the waters of the causal ocean—save for the two lotus feet of the Sustainer of the World.

Focusing his mind entirely on the Divine, with his head bowed in devotion, the son of Mukantha began to meditate upon the Lord’s lotus feet. Balancing himself with his great toe upon that Peepal leaf, he engaged in rigorous penance and spiritual practice for many thousands of years.

During the period of Markandeya's penance, a lotus emerged from the Lord's navel. From that lotus, infinite millions of four-faced Brahmas, like myself, were born.

Then Markandeya, his mind distressed by hunger, beheld the Lord of Lords, the Consort of Lakshmi, reclining upon the leaf-couch. Bowing his head in humility, the sage began to offer his prayers.

Markandeya said: 'O Compassionate One to the lowly! O Lord of the destitute! O Protector of the humble! O Savior! O Destroyer of the calamities brought by the enemies of the poor!' Thus he spoke in humble address.

'O Lord, You are the one who uplifts the fallen and fulfills the heart’s desires of the humble devotees. I am devoid of devotion and ignorant; pray forgive my wickedness.

O Lotus-navelled One! O Lotus-faced One! I bow to You. I am ignorant of Your true essence. Who can truly know Your nature? Grant me Your grace.

O Savior, I have sought refuge at Your lotus feet; protect me. O Lord, I am currently suffering greatly from hunger and thirst. Therefore, by Your mercy, rescue me quickly.'

Vasudeva said: 'O son of Bhrigu, look to my left side. Drink the milk from the breast of the Mother who resides there. Do so without any hesitation or fear in your heart.'"

Markandeya said: "Hearing my piteous words, the Lord spoke to me with a voice full of compassion: 'O son of Bhrigu! O Sage! With a heart free from hesitation, drink the milk from the breast of this female dog according to your desire.'"

Brahma said: "O Sages! Hearing these words from the Lord, the great yogi Markandeya began to contemplate: 'What is my duty now? I am tormented by hunger and exhaustion, and the time of my death draws near. In such a state, even the milk of a dog is life-saving; though it is usually forbidden, at this moment, it is beneficial.' Thinking thus, the high-souled Markandeya resolved that, according to the infallible command of the Divine, he must certainly drink that milk.

Thereupon, the highly effulgent Markandeya, with an undistracted mind and total reliance on the Lord's word, drank the milk. Immediately after the sage finished, Lord Hari vanished from before his eyes.

Beholding the disappearance of Hari, the best of the twice-born, Markandeya, became filled with immense wonder and began to ponder with an anxious heart: 'Was this a dream, or a delusion of my mind, or a collapse of my understanding? Alas! What a wondrous thing have I seen! What was this marvelous spectacle shown through Divine Maya?

I am deluded and cannot discern whether this was reality or unreality. I was not asleep, so how could it be a dream? Nor do I perceive any sign of ordinary madness. Therefore, it is certain that I have been enchanted by the Divine Illusion. Woe is me! What a great misfortune! I had the jewel in my hand, yet being of small intellect, I let it go.' Thinking thus, the sage lamented for a long time, sighing deeply and warmly in his grief, before falling into silence."

Brahma continued: "O Sages! While Markandeya remained silent, floating upon the waters of the causal ocean, the Lord—having vanished—began to contemplate His own purpose. At that moment, the Supreme Power spoke from the void, simply saying: 'Create!'

Hearing this command, Narayana began to lament: 'I am devoid of qualities and ignorant; how shall I, who am unskilled in the act of creation, bring forth diverse beings?' As he grieved thus, his mind turned toward penance. With eyes closed and

speech restrained, the immeasurable Soul steadied his mind between his eyebrows and began to meditate upon his own lotus feet.

Merging his mind into the Absolute, with his head bowed in devotion, Lord Vasudeva balanced himself upon the Peepal leaf with his great toe. For many thousands of years, he performed most difficult austerities. From the heat of this penance, a lotus emerged from his navel.

From that lotus, infinite millions of four-faced Brahmas like me were born, each destined to be the creator of a universe. From the chest of that Great Vishnu, infinite millions of Vishnus were born as protectors of the worlds. From his forehead, infinite millions of Rudras of terrible prowess were born. These Rudras, endowed with the quality of *Tamas* (darkness/destruction), became the annihilators of the three worlds. Thus, Brahma became the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the destroyer.

All we lotus-born Brahmas were commanded by Vishnu: 'O children! Through the power of penance, create diverse beings.' Providing us with all the Vedas and scriptures, the Supreme Lord Purushottama vanished from our sight in an instant.

After the Lord departed, the sinless Brahmas began the worship of Hari through severe penance. From the bodies of those lotus-born creators, through their fierce exertion, diverse beings were born.

By the power of their penance, the Manus, the Sages, and the Lords of Progeny (Prajapatis) came into existence. The four orders—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra—were established, and from them, thousands of mixed castes arose. One of the sons of Brahma, Daksha, gave his thirteen daughters to the sage Kashyapa.

From these daughters of Daksha were born the Devas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Vidyadharas, Serpents, Nagas, Kimpurushas, Rakshasas, Apsaras, Siddhas, and Pisachas. Among them were also born the Brahmarshis, Rajarshis, and various groups of Great Sages. Through the power of their difficult penances and meditation, these divine sages became highly effulgent, detached from all worldly enjoyments, and achieved great peace.

Furthermore, donkeys, camels, buffaloes, birds, horses, dogs, jackals, cows, sheep, goats, cats, and the Daityas and Danavas were born.

O Brahmins! Listen now as I briefly describe the celestial lineages. From Aditi were born the wielder of the thunderbolt, Indra, and the twelve suns. There arose the eight Vasus, the fourteen Yamas, the nine planets, and the twenty-seven stars—all of whom are beings of great spirit, immense energy, and might. These beings, of various forms and voices, became the high-souled guardians of the earth.

Thus ends the second chapter, titled "The Description of the Re-creation after the Dissolution," in the dialogue between Brahma and the Seven Sages, from the Radha-Hridayam of the Uttara-Khanda of the Brahmanda Purana.

Chapter Three: The Hymn to the Guru

Angiras said: "O Lotus-born one! I bow to You, O Lord who sits upon the lotus and whose face is as beautiful as its petals. O best of gods! What You have recounted is truly a magnificent narrative of the truths of the universe. Yet, O Lord worshiped by the gods, this does not answer the question we placed before You. Our inquiry was this: For what purpose did Lord Hari perform penance, and whom did He worship? In all You have said, we have yet to find the answer to that."

Dwaipayana said: "Addressing Lomaharshana, the great sage Dwaipayana continued: O wise one, hearing the words of Angiras, the lotus-born Brahma, whose face bloomed like a red lotus, smiled gently and began to provide the answer to their original question."

Brahma said: "O sinless Angiras, the true answer to your question has not yet been spoken. Thus far, I have only recounted the events of the creation and dissolution in brief, as part of the context.

Now, listen: while Lord Hari remained upon the Peepal leaf, performing penance to please the Primal Nature, that Supreme Maya—the excellent Nature known as Radha—manifested before Him.

As He remained absorbed in fierce austerities, a vast length of time passed. Then, the most excellent Goddess, she who deludes the entire universe, appeared to Narayana as an act of grace. She manifested with six arms, a form of incomparable beauty that dazed the senses. Radiant as ten million suns, she illuminated every direction with her own light. She was draped in crimson robes, adorned with red garlands, and her body was anointed with the fragrance of red sandalwood.

Adorned with earrings, armlets, bracelets, and a radiant crown, her form glowed with light. Her face was as beautiful as a blooming red lotus, and she was seated gracefully upon a lotus throne.

O Sage! In her six hands, she held the conch, the discus, the mace, the shakti (spear), the sword, and the club. She was surrounded on all sides by the gods, led by Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who praised her with hymns of her boundless virtues. This Goddess Radha is the fulfiller of all the desires of her devotees.

O wise one, within her every pore reside millions of universes, each containing its own Vishnu, Shiva with his mount, and Brahma.

O Brahmins! Beholding the earth, the netherworlds, the heavens, and all the gods within the pores of her skin, Lord Narayana folded his hands in reverence and prostrated before Radha like a rod.

Then Radha—the deluder of the very One who deludes the world—whose face is like a lotus, spoke to Narayana in a voice as deep as a rain-cloud, smiling gently with clear and sweet words.”

The Goddess said: "Listen, O child! O best among men! What benefit can I bestow upon you now? Listen to my beneficial words. Worship me by knowing my true essence.

O child! Through my worship, the perfection (*siddhi*) you desire shall be firmly attained."

Vasudeva said: "O Mother! In what manner, through what penance, and by what means should I worship you? Pray tell me, even if it be a path most difficult to tread."

The Goddess said: "O Destroyer of the enemies of the gods! Obtain from a Guru the sacred mantra along with the Brahma-yantra, the meditation, the rosary of alphabets (*Matrika-mala*), and the state of absorption (*Samadhi*).

By worshiping me with these, you shall quickly attain me. Through the mantra given by the Guru, the mind becomes pure. Once the mind is purified, you shall undoubtedly achieve success in your worship very swiftly.

Therefore, the Guru must be worshiped first, for he is indeed the Supreme Brahman. By his grace, after attaining perfection in the mantra, the embodied soul becomes one with Brahman.

Neither the yantra, nor the mantra, nor worship, nor chanting bears fruit without the Guru. O Deva! Know that without Guru-puja, all actions are fruitless.

Even if one chants a mantra millions of times, success will never be achieved without the satisfaction of the Guru. If the Guru is displeased, the Devas, Sages, Ancestors, and Brahmins will never accept one's offerings of water, flowers, or food.

If the Guru is displeased, the Ancestors, Devas, Sages, Brahmins, Fire, Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Rakshasas—though they may wish to help—are incapable of doing so.

All sacrifices, homas, and worships in this world become successful only through the satisfaction of the Guru. That fool who worships a deity without obtaining the mantra from a Guru dwells in a terrifying hell for tens of thousands of divine years.

O Slayer of the enemies of the gods! One should not criticize the Guru even in thought. For Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara themselves always await the command of the Guru and remain subject to his word.

Brahma said to the sages: "O twice-born ones! The Great Nature, Radha, then told Narayana: 'O Lord of Shri! He who does not follow the path shown by the Guru, or whose mind is not pure during worship and chanting, that embodied being is destined for hell.'

The Guru is the Deity; the Guru is the supreme Dharma. Devotion to the Guru is the highest penance. The Guru is the Supreme Brahman; therefore, the Guru alone is to be worshiped and meditated upon.

There is nothing higher than the Guru, not even the most Supreme. One should meditate on everything—yantras, mantras, and all else—as being permeated by the Guru.

By thought, word, and deed, one should always strive to please the Guru. The Guru is the Supreme Brahman in the form of light, the very embodiment of Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss (*Sacchidananda*).

The Guru is without attributes (*nirguna*), without parts (*nishkala*), peaceful, and the eternal giver of supreme bliss. Therefore, in all undertakings, one should satisfy the Guru with prostrations and never provoke his anger.

That fool who angers the Guru or criticizes him out of spite rots in a terrifying hell for the duration of four *Manvantaras*.

A wise seeker, having received the mantra from the Guru, should remain silent and composed. He should first worship the Guru and only then worship his chosen Deity.

If one worships the Guru with even greater devotion than the Deity, one attains the desired perfection. Therefore, with all effort, perform the worship of the Guru."

Vasudeva said: "O Goddess! What is the nature of this Guru who is to be worshiped? What is his form? Where does he reside, and by what means is he satisfied? Pray, reveal this to me."

The Goddess said: "O Hari! O wise one! Listen with a focused mind. I shall now reveal to you the essence of the Guru, along with the mantras and the method of worship.

The Guru is indeed the Divine Lord, the Eternal Supreme Soul. I shall describe the meditation (*Dhyana*) upon him; listen with a concentrated heart.

The Guru's form is as white and translucent as snow, the Kunda flower, a conch, the moon, or pure crystal. His face is as serene as a blooming white lotus, graced with a gentle, beautiful smile. His eyes are lovely, his cheeks and brow are well-formed, and his teeth and lips are exquisite. His two lotus feet shine with the brilliance of a clear red lotus.

His head and forehead are illuminated by a crown and earrings. His body is adorned with necklaces and armlets. Clad in white garments and decorated with white garlands and perfumes, the Guru—though essentially beyond all attributes (*Nirguna*)—is the very embodiment of the Brahman-Light. Out of compassion for his devotees, he assumes a physical form, appearing as a mass of intense radiance that dispels darkness from all directions.

O Achyuta! Upon his seat (within the thousand-petaled lotus of the head), the Guru is embraced by his own Shakti. This Shakti is crimson like the Hibiscus (*Jaba*) flower, dressed in red silk, and radiant as a thousand suns. She is adorned with red garlands and anointed with red sandalwood. With a face reddened by chewing betel leaf and a gentle smile, she embraces the Guru with arms as supple as lotus stalks.

The mantra is: '*Aim Gurave Tubhyam Namah*' (Salutations to you, O Guru). The seeker should worship the Guru with this mantra, with a heart purified by devotion and a mind that wanders nowhere else.

O mighty-armed Achyuta! The practitioner should chant this mantra, recite the Guru-Stotra (hymn), and chant the Guru-Kavacha (armor), which bestows all perfections (*siddhis*).

Out of affection for you, O Urukrama (Narayana), I shall now describe the order of worship. Rising early in the morning, one should meditate upon the Sri Guru at the crown of the head, as the bearer of the crescent moon. One should visualize the Guru with his Shakti within the twelve-petaled lotus at the center of the white thousand-petaled lotus. Having meditated thus, the wise seeker should perform their morning duties.

After bathing in pure water and donning two clean garments, the wise seeker should sit upon the prescribed seat and first perform the worship of the Guru. After

reciting the hymn and the protective armor, one should then worship their chosen Deity (*Ishta-deva*). I have revealed this sequence to you out of great love."

Vasudeva said: "O Mother! I bow to your two feet, which are like abundant lotuses. Pray, bestow such instruction upon me so that by your grace I may attain all perfections."

The Goddess said: "O Deva! This Guru-Stotra is highly secret, brings great merit, destroys the sins of the past, present, and future, and bestows all perfections. It must never be given to just anyone—especially not to the arrogant or those who take pleasure in harming others. (Listen now to the hymn):

'Salutations to your lotus-like feet, O Guru, who are like a thousand suns to the darkness of ignorance! Salutations to you, the sun that blossoms the lotus of true knowledge, the mighty light like a lamp!

O Giver of Brahman! Your mind is an ocean of compassion. Your teeth shine like the petals of a blooming lotus. I bow to your feet, worshiped by the gods, your form radiant with a crown, necklaces, armlets, and earrings.

O Lord! The brilliance of your body, rivaling the conch and the moon, has banished the darkness of all directions. You are the dispeller of all gloom, shining like a thousand suns. I bow to your excellent lotus feet.

O Guru! I bow to your feet, which are worthy of all reverence; pray be pleased with me. You are the Lord of devotees, the fulfiller of their desires, and compassionate toward the lowly. O Lord, you are the destroyer of the heart's darkness.

Worshiped by the assemblies of Devarshis, Rajarshis, Siddhas, and Maharshis! O you, endowed with secret virtues! I bow to your lotus-like feet.

Praised by the gods, Apsaras, Yakshas, Pisachas, Nagas, Vidyadharas, Adityas, and Maruts! O Lord, may your excellent feet be pleased with me; you are the destroyer of the mind's darkness.

O Lord! Your Shakti, red as the blooming Hibiscus, illuminates the horizon with her radiance. Your body is embraced by that Shakti. I bow to your two feet.

O Giver of Brahman! You are the bestower of liberation (*Apavarga*). Your feet are bowed to by Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu, Indra, and Kubera. Your feet are as serene as lotuses; O Lord, I bow to you.

Salutations to the Guru, who is beyond attributes yet the possessor of all virtues, the giver of all good qualities, the embodiment of Truth and Consciousness, the peaceful one, and the giver of supreme bliss.

O Lord of Yoga! You are reachable through Yoga, the partless, the actionless Soul. Salutations to the lotus-eyed one, the sun to the lotus of Vedanta!'"

Salutations to the Guru, who is the sun that blossoms the lotus of knowledge and dispels the darkness of ignorance. Your divine attributes are proclaimed throughout the Shrutis, Smritis, Puranas, Itihasas, Vedanta, Mimamsa, and the Agamas. I bow to that Sri Guru whose face is like a blooming lotus, by whose grace one attains the knowledge of Brahman, auspicious liberation, a pure intellect, and divine love.

Salutations to the giver of knowledge, the Supreme Soul, the sun that destroys the gloom of ignorance and the swan that glides upon the lotus of wisdom. I bow to the Sri Guru of infinite power, the pure seed of all knowledge, whose subtle form shines with the whiteness of snow, the Kunda flower, the moon, and the conch. I bow to the Guru who is eternal, the embodiment of eternal consciousness, the giver of eternal wisdom, and the one who awakens the understanding of the distinction between the eternal and the transient. Salutations to the Lord of all, who manifests in all forms and is the soul of everything.

This hymn is greatly meritorious; if one recites it or causes it to be recited, crossing the shoreless ocean of worldly existence becomes easy. Whether seeking learning, wealth, sons, or liberation, a person attains all their desires through this prayer. By the power of this recitation, all scriptures—the Vedas, Vedanta, Puranas, and Mimamsa—become mastered and settled in one's memory in an instant, even if they were never studied before. All perfections and the eight-fold mystic powers come into the palm of the hand for those who recite, teach, or listen to this hymn.

By the grace of the Satguru, all heart's desires are fulfilled; of this, I have no doubt. In a former age, Brahma, born from the navel-lotus of Vishnu, recited this hymn with a joyful heart. Before the dawn of creation, two fierce and powerful demons

named Madhu and Kaitabha were born from the wax of Lord Vishnu's ears while He slept upon the causal ocean. These two demons deluded Brahma and stole away all the Vedas and scriptures, taking them down to the netherworld. Having lost the source of knowledge, Brahma became deeply distressed and bewildered, wondering what had happened. He then pleased the Guru, who is worshiped by celestial sages, with this very stotra. Being satisfied, the Guru restored to Brahma the essential knowledge of the Vedas. Having regained this wisdom, the Lord of the Universe, Brahma, was then able to manifest the entire world.

Thus ends the third chapter, titled "The Hymn to the Guru," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Four: The Guru Kavacha

The Goddess Radha said: O Vasudeva! Listen to the protective armor of the Sri Guru, which is the ultimate source of well-being. By knowing this, the heart is filled with supreme bliss and the seeker attains the peace of liberation. This sacred armor of the Guru is the bestower of perfection to those who desire it. The meter of this Guru Kavacha is *Anushtup*, the Seer is the high-souled *Vyasa*, and the Deity is the *Sri Guru*; it is utilized for the attainment of all desires.

May the Sri Guru protect my head. May the Giver of Brahman protect my eyes. May the destroyer of the darkness of ignorance protect my mouth, including my teeth. May the Lord worshiped by the king of the gods protect my hair, and may He personally guard my chest. May the letter *Śa (श)* protect my arms and the letter *Ra (र)* protect my back. May the long vowel *Ī (ई)* protect the hair on my body, the letter *Ga (ग)* protect the navel, and the letter *U (उ)* protect my waist with eternal vigilance. May the letter *Ra (र)* protect the thighs, *Va (व)* protect the shanks, *Na (न)* protect the ankles, and *Ma (म)* protect my private parts.

May the *Visarga (ः)* protect my fingers along with the rows of my nails. May the mantra "*Namō Gaṃ Guravē*" protect all my limbs. In the East, may the Giver of Brahman protect me; in the Southeast, the all-pervading Giver of Knowledge. In the South, may the Destroyer of Ignorance protect me, and in the Southwest, the

Giver of the Eye of Wisdom. In the West, may He whose feet are eternally worshiped by Brahma and the gods protect me. In the Northwest, may the Master of all Scriptures protect me, and in the North, the Three-eyed Lord.

In the northeastern direction, may the Guru, who is radiant like the Kunda flower, protect me. Above, may He who holds His own Shakti protect me. Below, may the Lotus-eyed Lord protect me; and may the all-pervading Lord protect me everywhere and in every direction. May the Protector of all guard me while I stand; may the Giver of all guard me while I sleep; and may the one whose heart is filled with compassion protect me while I eat.

May the Lord of all protect me everywhere, and may the one worshiped by the gods protect me while I walk. Having thus established protection in every way, the seeker of perfection should secure their body with the name of the Guru. O wise one! Thereafter, the practitioner should chant the great mantra born of the eternal syllables. By doing so, one attains steady perfection quickly; of this, there is no doubt."

Thus ends the fourth chapter, titled "The Armour of the Guru," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Five: The Path of Kulachara and the Descent to Earth

The Goddess Radha said: O child, O child! Listen now to the most excellent of all methods of spiritual practice. Without this, a seeker of perfection can never achieve success. Even in a hundred crore kalpas, a practitioner who worships the Deity with Shakti cannot attain siddhi without the practice of *Kulachara* (the path of the lineage).

Vasudeva said: O Goddess, you are the very form of power for those who are powerless. O Binder of Strength! You are endowed with all energies, and without you, no other powers can even be called '*shakti*'. O Ishwari! You are the life-force

of all living beings and of me as well. Therefore, O beautiful one, perform the rituals of the *Kula* with me.

The Goddess said: O wicked one! You were born from my own essence, yet you speak to me as one would to a common woman (*punshchali*). Because of this evil thought, your heart's desire shall only be satisfied in a human birth through that very sentiment.

Vasudeva said: O beautiful one, calling you a 'punshchali' is not a lie. A woman is called such if she seeks two, five, or even twenty men; but you, as the Primal Power, dwell within every single male in the three worlds.Since you have cursed me for speaking the truth, you too shall be born in the womb of a lowly peahen.

The Goddess said: Listen to my words, O Deva—it shall be exactly as you say. I shall take birth as a peahen. However, the feathers from my head shall eternally adorn your crown, and through them, all your highest perfections shall be realized.

Vasudeva said: Neither I, nor the lotus-born Brahma, nor the Lord Ishana Sadashiva will be your husband then. O lowly one! You shall be wed to a common mortal man upon the earth.

The Goddess said: A portion of my divine light shall dwell within the women of the world, and with them, you shall perform the rituals of *Kulachara*. After some time has passed, O Krishna, you shall finally attain me again.

The Emergence of the Damsels and the Guru's Grace

Brahma said: Having spoken these words, the Goddess, her eyes red with anger, suddenly left Krishna. She transformed into a peahen and flew through the sky for one year before vanishing from sight.

Angiras asked: O Brahma, after the Goddess vanished, what did the great ascetic Lord Narayana do while staying there?

Brahma said: As the Goddess departed, a garland of unfading lotuses fell from her neck. Seeing this, Madhusudana was filled with great joy. Upon taking up that garland, O Sage, He saw hundreds of thousands of beautiful women emerge from it. They all possessed waists as slender as a lion's and eyes like those of a fawn.

They moved with gentle grace, their faces blooming like lotuses, adorned with red sandalwood, red silk, and exquisite jewelry. Radiant as the morning sun, they were the deluders of even the God of Love. With their beauty and sweet speech, they wandered freely, enchanting the minds of all.

Beholding these faultless, large-eyed women, the lotus-eyed Vasudeva asked: "Who are you, appearing like daughters of the gods, enchanting my mind? O auspicious ones, tell me truly, what is your desire?"

Brahma said: O Brahmins! Hearing His words, those lotus-faced women, struck by the arrows of love, spoke to Madhava in voices as sweet as the swan's. They said: "O Hari! Worship the eternal, supreme Guru. When He is pleased, you shall receive the mantra that grants all perfections. Then, through *Kulachara* with us, you shall quickly attain your ultimate goal."

Hearing their words, Narayana began to worship the Guru with various strict observances. After a long time, the Guru was pleased. He emerged from the twelve-petaled lotus within the thousand-petaled lotus of the head and appeared before Lord Madhava. Seeing the Guru seated upon a lotus with his Shakti, Vasudeva rose from his seat, prostrated with joy, and worshiped him with hymns, garlands, and divine garments.

Brahma said: Embracing Vasudeva with arms as soft as red lotuses, the Guru spoke in a pleasing voice: "O child! I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon, O Shauri! Whatever you desire, I shall grant it."

Vasudeva said: O Lord, I bow at your lotus feet. Please grant me a mantra that will make me peaceful, free from desire, silent, and pure of heart.

Brahma said: Having performed the initiation (*Diksha*) according to the sacred rites, the Guru was worshiped by Hari and then returned to his supreme abode. Finding himself fulfilled, the lotus-eyed Hari then began to contemplate where he should sit to perform the supreme penance required for the mastery of the mantra.

Thus ends the fifth chapter, titled "The Kaula Path and the Guru's Grace", in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Six: The Description of Goloka

Brahma said: “After the dissolution had ended, the God of gods, Janardana, traveled to his own supreme and wonderful abode known as Goloka. This realm exists in the void, without any support, extending for thirty million leagues. It is held up by the wind and the eternal will of the Lord.

That Goloka abode is circular, extending for thirty million leagues, and is a formless mass held aloft by the wind through the will of the Lord. The will of the Lord signifies the Supreme Soul's desire-power, Radha, by whom this realm is sustained. In that supreme abode, the Lord is engaged in eternal play.

It is beautiful, accessible to those who desire it, divine, and filled with all manner of jewels. It is well-surrounded by palaces, moats, and high walls. This enchanting realm is radiant, majestic, and travels wherever one wishes; it fulfills all longings and is adorned with the finest gems. It is graced with magnificent palaces and encircled by protective moats and jeweled walls. This description aligns with the essence of the chapter's wisdom. Even in a stationary state, its perfection is evident, and within it, the human form is most exalted.

The city is adorned with hundreds of gates and archways decorated with rubies and other gems; it is further beautified by rows of elephants, horses, chariots, and various weapons. Hundreds of house-rows and gateways (known as *toraṇas*) add to its splendor. Chariots, elephants, and horses are stationed there, fully equipped with a variety of arms and armaments.”

Brahma said: "O children! In their longing for a vision of the Lord, countless holy men are performing penance there. Some subsist on fruits, roots, and water; some live only on dry leaves; others remain without food, subsisting on air alone, strictly observing vows like the *Chāndrāyaṇa*. Such is the nature of Goloka.

Standing on the tips of their toes, glowing like fire, with their hair matted and wearing bark garments, these sages are immersed in devotion. Some stand with arms raised toward the heavens, while others remain upside down with their feet pointing upward, touching the earth only with their thumbs. Through their austere

vows, their bodies have become completely withered, leaving only life-breath and bone, yet their hearts are joined with the stainless, eternal, and Supreme Brahman, immersed in the bliss of divinity.

Some of these self-realized souls, covered in deer skins, are heard reciting the hymns of the Shrutis, while others teach them to their students. The abode is further adorned by devotees of Narayana, peaceful and purified of sin through penance, wearing tilaka marks and garlands of Tulsi buds. It is surrounded by Munis, Siddhas, and those who speak of the Brahman—scholars well-versed in the Vedas, Itihasas, Mimamsa, Puranas, and the Agamas.

Those who dwell there are constantly asking, speaking, or hearing of the virtues of Hari; they sing His glories and worship the stainless Narayana. The realm is filled with wise Brahmins who spend their days in contemplation, worship, breath control (*Prāṇāyāma*), and steady concentration (*Dhāraṇā*), making long days pass as if they were mere moments.

Every doorway is decorated with hundreds of auspicious pots filled with cool water, parched grain, sandalwood, garlands, yogurt, and unbroken rice, and adorned with coconuts, betel nuts, banana fruits, and flowers. These auspicious vessels are topped with mango leaves and coconuts, and the city is filled with fluttering banners of white, red, blue, and yellow that seem to touch the very peaks of the temples.

Each temple is covered with white umbrellas and fanned by white yak-tail whisks; the interiors are filled with the finest jeweled thrones. The golden altars are encrusted with various types of gems and the air is filled with the resonance of the Vedas, Vedanta, Vedangas, Agamas, and Puranas."

Brahma said: "O twice-born ones! In that Goloka, the houses are illuminated by the light of precious gems like sapphire, ruby, magnet-stone, moonstone, and sunstone. It is filled with the sweet voices of bards, heralds, and singers who are experts in the scriptures of praise, singing hymns in melodious tones.

The realm shines with millions of chariots and heroic men clad in excellent armor, glowing with crowns, necklaces, armlets, and earrings, satisfied by grand beds, seats, drinks, and food. The Supreme Lord constructed thirteen main gateways,

built of wondrous gems, rubies, diamonds, and sandalwood, and adorned with colorful garlands and clothes.

The Description of the First Gate of Goloka

At the first gate of the thirteen-gated Goloka, the gatekeepers are stationed with various weapons. They wear finger-guards made of iguana skin and carry bows, arrows, sharp swords, maces, and spears. They are equipped with axes, javelins, clubs, nooses, iron arrows, and various other missiles. Others hold weapons of the Sun, the Gandharvas, and the Pisachas, as well as tridents, thunderbolts, the noose of Indra, the weapon of Pashupati, the Wheel of Time, and the Sudarshana chakra. Stationed in their proper places, these guardians protect the gates with weapons of fire, wind, water, and the asuras, glowing with fearsome energy.

The Description of the Second Gate

At the second gate, actors, heralds, bards, singers, and reciters of the Smritis reside. All manner of craftsmen, musicians, and melodious singers stay at this second entrance to guard and grace the threshold.

The Description of the Third Gate

At the third gate, the youthful cowherd boys (*Gopa-balas*), who are fond of childhood games, stand guard. They are tender of body, exceedingly beautiful, and possess the same noble nature as the great-souled Sri Krishna; they are His dear friends."

Brahma said: "O wise ones! Listen as I tell you the names of these friends of Sri Krishna who stand at the third gate, according to my memory and knowledge. They are Sridama, Subala, Vasudama, Sudama, Vrikanana, Mahasya, Brihalloma, and Sunasika. Also Lalasa, Suprabha, Stokakrishna, Lolalochana, Krishnaksha, Malyavan, Ghora, Dirghachakshu, and Mriganana. Others include Virochana, Dirghabahu, Subahu, Shudraroma, Mridupat, Madhuravak, Shankhu, Vachala, Mukhara, and Jaya. Then there are Durjaya, Vijaya, Jantu, Priyavadi, Priyasana, Satyavak, Satyabandha, the gatekeeper Dauvarika, and Baleshvara. Also Gudhabuddhi, Vraja, Dhaumya, Priyakrishna, Priyamvada, Guptakrodha, Mahadeva, Sukrida, and Kridapriya. Further names are Adhara, Ramabhadra,

Paripatra, Shubhangada, Sushila, Satyavak, Satyadharma, and Damodarapriya. Finally, Dharmachita, Tikshnavakya, Haridasa, Nara, Shaka, Bhakta, Bhajanakan, Sukshmadrik, and Sundara.

There are others like Arudeva, Vishalaksha, Vishatikshna, Ragodara, Sudeva, Satyavarma, Vasusena, and Susena. Also Sukarma, Satyadeva, Sundaraksha, Subhadrajit, Paribhadra, Sudharma, Surasena, and Surapriya. These and many other cowherd boys, devoted to Narayana, stay at the third gate. Some carry flutes, some canes, and some buffalo horns; others hold blooming lotuses, swords, staffs, or iron clubs.

Eager to play with the Lord, they stay there for a vision of the one who destroyed the demon Madhu. The Lord, Madhusudana, eternally plays with them like a child. Out of His great mercy, the Lord tends to hundreds of thousands of cows just like a cowherd boy. Every day, He eats cakes, rice, various fruits and roots, along with yogurt, milk, ghee, butter, and many kinds of sweets in the company of all these playful cowherd boys."

The Description of the Fourth Gate

"At the fourth gate, O sages, listen! There stand the professional dancers and musicians, skilled in the arts of dance and song, waiting to please Sri Krishna."

The Description of the Fifth Gate

At the fifth gate stand the two cane-bearing guardians, **Jaya** and **Vijaya**. They are the most eminent of the Lord’s attendants, serving as the sovereign chiefs over all gatekeepers, protecting the entrance with staffs in hand.

The Description of the Sixth Gate

At the sixth gate reside the supreme attendants clad in the attire of cowherds. Among them are the royal sages (*Rajarsis*), led by the great **Ambarisha**, who have attained Goloka and stay there in divine service.

The Description of the Seventh Gate

At the seventh gate, all the sages are found to be free from worldly desires and peaceful of mind. They remain perpetually satisfied, drinking the dripping nectar from the lotus of Sri Krishna's divine qualities.

The Description of the Eighth Gate

The sages at the eighth gate spend their days in a state of constant bliss, hearing, reciting, and singing the glories of Hari. Through their strict vows, fasts, and disciplines, long stretches of time pass for them as if they were mere moments.

The Description of the Ninth Gate

At the ninth gate, the ten Directions (*Dikpalas*) are stationed upon their respective mounts, adorned with crowns, turbans, crests, earrings, and necklaces. Beside them stand millions of **Vishnus**, holding the conch and the lotus, and millions of **Rudras** of fierce power, armed with tridents and axes.

These hosts, along with their followers, weapons, and divine vestments, engage in singing and laughing. In a joyful, playful mood, they dance, play various musical instruments, and perform the great *Sankirtana* of Hari's names. Constantly describing and drinking the incomparable nectar of the Lord's attributes, they meditate with one-pointed focus on His two lotus feet.

The Description of the Tenth Gate

At the tenth gate stand the most excellent attendants, their faces illuminated by the glow of their earrings. They hold various weapons such as the conch, discus, lotus, and iron clubs (*parigha*). Clad in yellow garments that trigger a thrill of devotion (*pulaka*) throughout their bodies, they are adorned with garlands, perfumes, crowns, and armlets.

These attendants have abandoned all greed and pride; they are devoid of violence or malice. O best of the twice-born! They are self-effulgent and exist in a state of eternal festival. Some sing, some laugh, and others dance, immersed in the sweet melodies of Hari's praises. They play thousands of instruments and drums, producing music that is profoundly pleasing to both the mind and the ear.

The Description of the Eleventh Gate

At the eleventh gate, thousands of thousand-eyed Indras, bearing thunderbolts, describe the glories of the Lord. They clap their hands and shout cries of victory to please the Lord Urukrama (Govinda). Joining them are thousands of Yamas (Lords of Death), Agnis (Lords of Fire), and Nirritis, all engaged in worshiping the Lord and hearing His virtues.

Thousands of Varunas (Lords of the Waters), Kuberas (Lords of Wealth), Pavanas (Lords of the Wind), and Ishanas are also there. Hundreds of thousands of Ananta-Sheshas, the thousand-hooded serpent kings, reside here singing His praises. These great souls are devoid of pride, violence, and vanity. They are immensely powerful, accompanied by their own armies and mounts, their faces glowing with earrings and their bodies decorated with jeweled necklaces and armlets.

The Description of the Twelfth Gate

At the twelfth gate reside those dear to the Lord who enchant the hearts of all. Appearing in the form of Vishnu, they are adorned with wonderful garlands and anointed with divine sandalwood. They are four-armed, beautifully holding the conch, discus, mace, and lotus.

They wear wondrous turbans and armor, carry diverse weapons, and are fanned by exquisite whisks. Seated upon chariots bearing colorful flags and banners, they shine with crowns and jewelry. Some among them carry white umbrellas, their faces graced with gentle smiles.

The Description of the Thirteenth Gate

At the thirteenth gate stay the most beloved attendants of the Lord. They wear the attire of cowherds, with yellow cloth (*dhoti*) wrapped around their waists and their bodies anointed with *Gopi-chandana*. These attendants are completely submerged in the ocean of the realization of Hari's essence; they are pure-souled beings whose very breath is sanctified.

Their arms are beautiful, holding flutes, canes, buffalo horns, and bouquets of flowers. They have attained the highest state of excellence, constantly engaged in narrating the stories of Hari. Others among them, dressed in unique ornaments, perform the *Sankirtana* of Narayana's name, their voices rising like flutes. Their accumulated sins have been entirely burnt away by the rising sun of their thousands of rays of spiritual knowledge.

Brahma said to Angiras: "O son! Listen with a concentrated mind as I tell you the names of these attendants at the thirteenth gate: Nanda, Sunanda, Sananda, Upananda, Prananda, Nandananda, Vinanda, Nityananda, Sanatana, Nandanava, Nandaka, Bhadrananda, and Senanda.

Also Advaita, Harshaka, Hrishta, Shubravasa, Shubhanana, Divya, Divyaprabhava, Daivajna, and Devasevaka. Others include Jnanavadata, Shubhavadi, Shuchismita (of pure smile), Shubhangada, Hatakilmisha, Krishnadasa, Kritajna, Satyavadi, and Shuchi.

Kapila, Shubhachara, Kshemabuddhi, Vinodana, Pushta, Poshaka, and Hiranyavapu (of golden body). Susharma, Dharmasetu, Balaki, Dridhabuddhi, Chitrakarma, Suchitrangada, Chitraksha, and Chitrabhushana. Gaya, Haya, Maya, Vajra, Krishnavasa, Vikartana, Harsha, Praharsha, Shriharsha, Upaharsha, and Suharshaka. Viharsha, Pratiharsha, Mandaharsha, Sangharshaka, Harshaharsha, Nityaharsha, Samharsha, and Bhadraharsha.

Also Akrodha, Vishahanta, Raudrakarma, Vrishanana, Mrigaksha, Shubhravaktra, Shubhashi, and Shubhadarshana. There are countless others who carry the pleasure of Sri Krishna's heart within them. And within the inner sanctum of the most beautiful palace dwell the women who are beloved to Narayana."

The Description of the Inner Sanctum (Antahpura)

All the women of the inner sanctum are enchanting to the youth and possess exquisite beauty. They wear jeweled earrings and are dressed in garments of white, black, blue, yellow, and red. These slender-waisted women wear jeweled necklaces that rest upon their lotus-like breasts. Their complexions glow like molten gold, and they are adorned with golden ornaments.

They walk with the slow, majestic gait of an elephant and possess voices as sweet as a swan's. Adorned with wonderful garlands and anointed with celestial perfumes, their bodies are covered in ruby-encrusted jewelry. Radiating immense brilliance, they are eager for the pastimes of Sri Krishna. With their side-long glances, they can enchant any man; each woman appears like another form of Rati (the Goddess of Love).

With their youth, beauty, and graceful movements, their sacred smiles and sweet laughter enchant even the mind of Kamadeva (the God of Love). In their beauty, elegance, and sweetness, they are like other forms of the Goddess Lakshmi. These faultless-limbed women are like the very rays of the Sun.

The Flora of Goloka

Brahma said to Angiras: O twice-born! In the aforementioned Goloka-dhama, many enchanting gardens are radiant. In those gardens, trees such as Champaka, Ashoka, Punnaga, Nagakeshara, Bakula, Mallika, Malati, Juthi, Karavira, and Karandaka are beautifully adorned with flowers.

Aparajita of various colors, clusters of Agastya flowers, Bhumi-champaka, Jayanti, Tagara, Kunda, Jaba, and Kuruvaka trees abound. Cloves, Jati flowers, Tanka, Muchukunda, and other trees with fresh, beautiful leaves are present. Others are adorned with blue and yellow Jhintu flowers, Sthalapadma, Akanda, and Magadha (Kunda) trees.

There are rows of trees entwined with fragrant Madhavi vines and Mallika flowers. The groves are beautified by Bakula and Nakula flowers of white, red, blue, yellow, and dark hues. Trees of Pari-bhadra, the fragrant Parijata that spreads its scent for a *yojana*, Santana, Piyala, Jackfruit, Mango, and blossoming Kadamba adorn the land.

There are trees of Badari, Kovidara (Kanchan), Betel nut, and Date palm. Furthermore, Bibhitaki, Tamarind, and Haritaki trees populate the landscape. Asvattha, Dhataki, Amalaki, Red Sandalwood, Bael, Palm, Tamala, Hintala, and Khadir trees are present. Bamboo, Kinshuka (Palash), Banyan, Tinduka, Ingudi, and Shalmali trees abound, alongside Arjuna, Plaksha, Jambala, Lodhra, Cane, and White Sandalwood trees.

The gardens are further beautified by Orange, Citron, Kamranga, Coconut, and Rose-apple (Jam) trees, as well as Neem, Mahaneem, Dadhitha, Hog-plum, Kapittha, golden Pomegranate, and Sephaka (Apple) trees.

The Eternal Seasons and Sacred Waters

The trees in the Lord's sporting gardens are eternally laden with flowers and fruits, possessing beautiful new leaves and steady shade. The six seasons—Spring, Summer, Monsoon, Autumn, Pre-winter, and Winter—worship the Lord in personified forms, offering flowers and fruits appropriate to each.

The supreme gardens of Goloka are beautified by artificial rivers, grand lakes, and ponds. Step-wells, tanks, and long lakes (*dirghikas*) flow here and there, gracing the land. The region is adorned with mountain springs and pools of sacred water. Goloka is filled with personified rivers and holy temples. It is exceptionally beautiful, marked by sacred pilgrimage sites and waters bearing the footprints of the Lord.

The Lakes and Celestial Birds

The lakes of the Lord's abode are graced with Kumuda, Kahlara, Kokanada, white hundred-petaled lotuses, and thousand-petaled or hundred-thousand-petaled red lotuses.

In the forests along the banks of these delightful waters, Cuckoos perched on flowering branches sing melodiously. Pelicans, Cranes, Sarasa birds, and Chakravakas, as well as Swans and their mates, play in every lake, making sweet sounds. Melodious Dadal birds, Roosters, and wild Fowl play in great joy. On the peaks of every palace, Parrots, Mynas, Pigeons, and Peacocks add to the splendor of the mansions.

Birds like Crows, Owls, and Hawks fly here and there, chirping. Bees, intoxicated by the festival of love, create a constant humming sound everywhere. Driven by the wind, the scent of nectar from the flowers attracts the bees to the beautiful flowering vines and shrubs. Goloka, the eternal abode of infinite beauty, is surrounded by secluded bowers (*nikunjas*) and cottages adorned with fragrant garlands.

The Creatures and Personified Time

In various places, the forests are graced by Lions, Tigers, Boars, Chamari cattle, and Buffaloes, as well as Monkeys, Bears, Jackals, and great venomous Serpents. Wolves, Mongooses, Porcupines, Musk deer, and other deer, along with Horses, Mules, Donkeys, and Elephants, roam and beautify the land. Rhinoceroses, wild Cats, and various species of deer play joyfully with their mates. Most wondrously, the predatory animals and the peaceful ones play together with mutual affection, their hearts free from violence.

Brahma says: O best of the twice-born, Angiras! Kalpas, Manvantaras, Yugas, Years, Months, Fortnights, Tithis, Days, and Nights—along with Planets, Stars, Yogas, Zodiac signs, Karanas, and moments of time like Kala, Kastha, and Muhurta—all reside eternally in Goloka in personified forms to worship the Lord.

The land is served by Yakshas, Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Pisachas, Nagas, Kinnaras, Vidyadharas, Charanas, and celestial birds. It is also frequented by Daityas, Danavas, and sages learned in the Vedas, as well as striving ascetics, Vetals, Kushmandas, Bhairavas, and the Pramatha hosts. The mountains serve in personified forms, and Nagas like Dhritarashtra take on human forms. Goloka is served by all-auspicious, well-behaved, and non-violent beings.

All inhabitants of Goloka are devoted to Narayana, free from pride and vanity. This supreme and beautiful city is a delight to the mind and the ear.

The Lord's Absorption

In those prosperous temples, adorned with wonderful pillows and beds, the Lord Sri Krishna—the destroyer of the enemies of the gods—remained so absorbed in divine play with the aforementioned celestial women that He did not realize how many days had passed.

Brahma said to Angiras: O wise one! The Supreme Person, Vasudeva Krishna, spent countless years sporting with those hundreds and thousands of women. Because His senses were entirely immersed in that bliss, the boon-words spoken previously by the Great Nature (*Prakriti*) did not remain in His memory.

Thus ends the sixth chapter, titled "The Description of Goloka" in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Seven: Vrishabhanu Receives a Boon

Brahma said: Because of the curse of Sanat-kumara, the entire city fell into uncertainty. At that time, those Vaishnavas—the attendants of the Lord—became broken in their resolve and enthusiasm. They took birth on Earth in the Vrishni and Kuru clans at the end of the *Dwapara Yuga*. Nanda and the other cowherds, and the boys like Sridama, also took birth in the land of Vraja.

Women like Lalita and others were born in Gokula, near the Govardhana hill, where flowers and fruits bloom eternally. This place, near the banks of the Kalindi, is where I, the Ancient One, had previously established the image of Sri Radha.

The Original Form of Sri Radha

The image I established possessed eight arms and large eyes, with a crescent moon upon her crest. Her face was illuminated by the light of her crown, necklaces, armlets, and earrings. She was covered in various ornaments and wore a serpent as a sacred thread. Clad in red garments the color of pomegranate flowers and adorned with red garlands, she glows like ten million suns. Her complexion is like molten gold, radiant and fierce. With her eight arms, she holds the conch, the discus, the mace, the spear, the plow, the club, and the gestures of fearlessness (*abhaya*) and boons (*varada*). Thus, she is eight-armed.

This goddess, the supreme and most excellent Radha, is the object of ultimate worship. She resides eternally in the realm of Vrindavana. As the presiding deity and Queen of Vraja, she grants all boons to those who worship her.

Angiras said: O Father! I have heard many narrations from your lotus-like mouth. Now, O Lord, please tell me in detail how that Mahamaya Radha was worshipped by Vrishabhanu and how she manifested before him.

Brahma said: My son! There was a king named Mahabhanu, the Lord of Gokula and the sovereign of all cowherds. He had four sons, all of whom were great souls, masters of their senses, and devoted Vaishnavas. Their names are as follows: Vrishabhanu (also called Vrishabhanu), Ratnabhanu, Subhanu, and Pratibhanu. Among these four brothers, the eldest, Vrishabhanu, inherited the kingdom and became king.

Desiring the pleasure of the Lord, Vrishabhanu performed hundreds of great sacrifices such as the *Ashvamedha*, *Bajapeya*, and *Rajasuya*, giving vast amounts in charity. Though born in the lineage of the Vaishyas, he ruled a vast kingdom by the strength of his own arms and became a *Chakravarti* (emperor) equal to a royal sage. By his penance, he was regarded by the saints as equal to a *Brahmarshi*. He was self-controlled, a master of his senses, a great giver, without enemies, and a protector of all subjects. At that time, no king stood against him.

In forgiveness, Vrishabhanu was equal to the earth; in charity, he was like a rain cloud that showers everywhere and satisfies the hearts of all. In brilliance, he was like the sun, and in stability, he was like the great mountain Himalaya. In valor, he was like Rudra; in anger, he was like fire; in strength, like the wind; in gravity, like the ocean; and in majesty, like Shiva.

In that land of Vraja, there was an eminent cowherd named Bindu. He was a great devotee of Vishnu, and his wife's name was Mukhara. Five sons were born from the womb of Mukhara: Bhadrakirti, Chandrakirti, Mahabala, Sridama, and Mahakirti. Bindu also had three daughters: Bhanumudra, Kirtimati, and the youngest, Kirtida (who is called Kalavati in other Puranas).

O Brahmin! The five sons of Bindu, led by Bhadrakirti, married five daughters named Menaka, Mena, Shashthi, Dhatri, and Dhataki in due order. The youngest sister of Bhadrakirti and the others was Kirtida. Vrishabhanu married her according to the sacred rites. Vrishabhanu’s heart became deeply bound to Kirtida due to her noble character, and he spent many years immersed in the happiness of her company.

The King, an expert in the arts of love, united with her during every fertile season, desiring a son. However, even after a long time, he could not obtain a child, which

made him extremely dejected. Eventually, as the couple grew older and remained filled with anxiety and grief, they began to wander to holy places, temples, sacred lakes like Manasa-bindu-sarovara, holy rivers like the Ganges, and supreme sacred fields like Purushottama-kshetra.

To obtain a child, Maharaja Vrishabhanu worshipped the Supreme Lord through many sacrifices, giving vast wealth and gems as dakshina through sages who were knowers of the Brahman. Yet, when he still did not obtain an offspring despite these sacrifices, his heart became overwhelmed with grief. While contemplating this, he fainted for a moment and fell to the earth as if dead.

Seeing her husband, the King, fallen unconscious on the ground, the virtuous Kirtida began to speak words that were for his own benefit. She said: "O Lord, abandon this temporary grief and take shelter of the Mother of the Universe, Ambika. If she is pleased by your penance, your prayers, your thoughts, your service, and your discipline, she will easily grant you your desired fruit. There is no other refuge in this world; she alone gives joy to the heart. Therefore, taking shelter of her is our highest path."

Kirtida continued: "O King! Near the excellent Govardhana hill, by the banks of the clear-watered Yamuna, sits the auspicious image of Mahamaya Katyayani. That place is enchanting, covered in trees and vines, and filled with hundreds of bowers. It resonates with the sounds of various deer and birds, and intoxicated bees constantly hum among the flowers. The Supreme Nature, the Goddess Katyayani, who is the form of knowledge and the granter of boons to all beings, resides there. If you wish for a beneficial boon, then worship that Great Goddess with total care."

Brahma said to Angiras: O son! Hearing these beneficial words from the mouth of his beloved Kirtida, King Vrishabhanu, who was distressed by childlessness, immediately went to the forest near Govardhana to perform penance.

Reaching the beautiful banks of the Kalindi and purifying himself by touching its sacred water, he sat upon a clean seat with a focused mind. He controlled his vital breaths—*prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana*, and *vyana*—and took a vow of silence. Through steady yoga, he merged the fire within his body into the wind, the wind into the water, and the water into the sky. Drawing up his individual soul with the

Kula-kundalini from the *Muladhara*, he joined it with the Supreme Soul in the thousand-petaled lotus at the crown of his head and made his mind unmoving.

He worshipped the Goddess for one year while standing in the water. For one month he ate only fruits and roots; for another, only water; for the next, only leaves; and for the last, he subsisted only on air. Thus, he spent one year eating once a day and another year without any food at all, mastering his senses. Standing on the thumb of his foot with his arms raised, he spent several years, and later stood upside down with his feet in the air, his body scorched by the elements.

The King, with a disciplined mind, spent a hundred years in such severe austerities. When those hundred years passed, a voice from the sky, the Goddess of Speech, spoke to him from the heavens. Addressing Maharaja Vrishabhanu with a deep sound that filled the sky, she said: "O Vrishabhanu! Listen to these words which are for your benefit. O son! Act upon these auspicious words thereafter. Without the name of Hari, O son, the ears of a living being are not purified. Therefore, the chanting of Hari's name is the most beneficial path. O King! Now, according to the proper order, receive the name of Hari from a Guru. For after receiving the name and practicing with the mantra, you shall attain perfection."

Hearing the voice from the sky, Vrishabhanu humbly said to the Goddess: "O Mother! You are the Supreme Nature, the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe. You have commanded me to receive the name of Hari; please tell me the glory of that name and the method by which it should be received."

Brahma said: Hearing these words of the King, the Great Goddess spoke slowly in a voice as deep as thunder. The Goddess said: "O mighty-armed one! On the sacred banks of the River Viraja, in a place served by the celestial sages, the great and glorious sage Kratu is engaged in penance. Go there and hear from him the glories of the name of Hari."

Brahma said: My son! Maharaja Vrishabhanu, the destroyer of enemies, drank the nectar-like words of the Goddess. Abandoning his severe penance and feeling very humble, he went quickly and reached the sage Kratu. He beheld that great sage standing in his ascetic power and let out a long sigh.

Here is the faithful translation of the text provided, maintaining the original narrative structure and first-person voices.

Vrishabhanu Meets Sage Kratu

Brahma said to Angiras: O son! Maharaja Vrishabhanu, the destroyer of enemies, fell at the feet of the worshipful sage who was seated in a yogic posture. He let out deep, hot sighs. Then, the illustrious King, with a voice choked with emotion, spoke to the best of sages.

Vrishabhanu said: Save me, O great Yogi! Protector of those who seek refuge, compassionate to the distressed, O Lord of Charity, O Divine Sage—I bow to you. O Master of the Universe! Noble souls are always kind to the lowly; therefore, knowing me to be utterly destitute, please protect me.

Brahma continued: Thus praised by the King, the worshipful Sage Kratu, a treasure of mercy who possessed nothing but his devotion, comforted the King and spoke to him in sweet words.

Kratu said: Do not fear, my son! Why do you tremble? I perceive a great fear in you. For what purpose are you performing penance, O King? What sorrow resides in your heart? Tell me the thoughts that weigh upon your mind. Out of affection for you, I shall fulfill your desire, even if it be nearly impossible to achieve.

Vrishabhanu said: O Lord! If you are pleased with this lowly one, what is unattainable in these three worlds? If I have your grace, then mercifully grant me the most rare name of Hari. O refuge of all, I bow to you. Be pleased with me, O knower of the universe!

Brahma said: O son! The great sage Kratu, whose face bloomed like a lotus, was pleased by the King's humility. He granted the name of Hari to the surrendered Vrishabhanu and instructed him in the proper method of its chanting.

The Greatness of the Hari-Nama Mantra

Lomaharshana (Suta) asked Vedavyasa: O Lord! O Master Dwaipayana! You have mentioned the great mantra known as 'Hari-Nama' which brings success. What is that mantra? Please tell it to me out of your mercy.

Dwaipayana (Vyasa) replied: By receiving this mantra, a person becomes divine (*Brahmamaya*). Even a person who has committed the sin of drinking wine becomes instantly purified and attains all perfections upon receiving this name. I shall tell you this mantra, for you are a great devotee (*Mahabhagavata*).

> **Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare | Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare ||**

This sixteen-word, thirty-two syllable name of the Lord is synonymous with Brahman. The word *Hari* is auspicious; its remembrance destroys the inauspiciousness of death and brings immortality. The word *Rama* delights all; He is the giver of long life and the enchanter of all. These names are adjectives of the Supreme Brahman: *Satya* (Truth), *Jnana* (Knowledge), and *Ananda* (Bliss). *Rama* is the name of Bliss, *Krishna* is the name of Knowledge, and *Hari* is Truth. To show the non-difference between these qualities, each name is uttered twice.

Chanting this great mantra one hundred and eight times during the three periods of the day (dawn, noon, and dusk) destroys all sins. There is no better way than this in all the Vedas to cross the ocean of material existence. This has been proclaimed by the Shrutis, Smritis, Puranas, Itihasas, Tantras, and all systems of philosophy like Mimamsa and Vedanta.

Chanting this name destroys the three types of miseries—physical, mental, and environmental. It is described in the scriptures as the ultimate atonement (*prayaschitta*) for all sins, including the most heinous crimes. There is no greater merit (*punya*) in the three worlds. Chanting this name is a direct vision of the Savior Brahman.

Even a drinker of wine, a killer of Brahmins, a thief of gold, a violator of vows, or one who is impure and fallen—even they attain liberation through the chanting of the names of Vishnu. Therefore, wise scholars should always perform *Sankirtana*. If Shishupala, the son of Damaghosha, attained the supreme state merely by remembering Govinda out of hatred, then what can be said of those who remember Him with devotion?

The Manifestation of Mahamaya Radha

Vyasa said: After giving this mantra, the Lordly Sage Kratu spoke these beneficial words to Vrishabhanu while remembering Hari in his heart.

Kratu said: Whether one is a Shakta, Vaishnava, Saura, Shaiva, or Ganapatya—the ears are only purified by the chanting of Hari's name. One should not be initiated into any other mantra without first receiving the name of Hari, for the ears do not bear fruit without it. O King, until the name of Hari enters the ear-holes, those ears remain as impure as the ears of a corpse.

Brahma continued: O twice-born! The wise King Vrishabhanu worshipped Sage Kratu, bowed to him, and with a heart full of devotion and a body trembling with joy, he departed while chanting the great mantra.

He reached the banks of the Kalindi and began chanting that supreme mantra. After several days, the Mother of the Universe, the eternal, primordial Nature (*Mula-prakriti*) who is Brahman personified, became pleased. Her face blooming like a lotus, the Great Maya manifested before the King.

Beholding the Mother of the World shining before him with a great light, King Vrishabhanu bowed his head in devotion. With a heart full of joy, he began to pray to the Goddess.

Vrishabhanu said: O Mother of the Universe! O Giver of Liberation! This supreme form I behold is indescribable by speech. Your inconceivable form is beyond the reach of meditation, and your glory is unknown even to Brahma and the gods. I am of dull intellect; how can I praise you?

By the power of meditating on your form, Brihaspati became the Lord of Speech. Brahma attained his position by holding your form in his heart. Indra gained the sovereignty of the three worlds by contemplating your lotus feet. Vishnu protects the world and enjoys all happiness through your grace. Therefore, I bow to you with constant devotion.

O Empress of the World! I am poor, foolish, and devoid of devotion. Yet, desiring to show me grace, you have revealed your lotus feet to me. Let my head remain at your lotus feet like a bee, thirsting for the nectar of liberation. This form,

unattainable through penance, speech, deeds, or the mind, you have shown me out of mercy. I bow to you, O lover of your devotees!

I bow to you, the support of the universe and the enchantress of the world. O You who are worshipped by the Lord of the Universe! I pray that your world-bewildering Maya may never delude me. I bow to your lotus feet, O Goddess worshipped by Vishnu. Save me, O Maheswari, for I am a helpless orphan! You are the savior of the poor and the support of all—the one who is herself without support, yet holds the beauty of the entire earth!

The Prayer of Vrishabhanu

Brahma said to Angiras: O Goddess! You are the support of the Vedas and all knowledge. You are worshipped by the entire universe, and I bow to you.

My son! Having achieved the fulfillment of his desires, King Vrishabhanu praised the Goddess in this manner, bowing repeatedly with deep devotion and folded hands.

The Goddess said: O son! I am greatly pleased by your self-control, your penance, your worship, your devotion, your forgiveness, and your hymns of praise. You are a worthy recipient of my grace. I am your benefactor; ask of me any boon you desire.

Vrishabhanu said: O Goddess! If you are pleased with me, what is unattainable in these three worlds? Indeed, seeking refuge at your lotus feet is the ultimate achievement. You are the soul of all beings and you know what resides in my heart. Why then do you bewilder me with nets of words? If a boon is to be given, grant me that which my heart truly desires.

Brahma said: Hearing these words, the Mother of the Universe, Katyayani, placed a divine Egg (*Dimba*)—radiant like a thousand suns—into Vrishabhanu's hands and vanished in an instant. The mighty King, filled with supreme joy upon receiving the Egg, returned to his palace.

Thus ends the seventh chapter, titled "The Worship of Vrishabhanu," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Eight: The Birth of Sri Radhika

Brahma said: Listen, my son Angiras. Maharaja Vrishabhanu's queen, Kirtida Devi, her body adorned with various ornaments, lay upon a jeweled couch, surrounded always by ten million companions. The Queen wore divine garments and was anointed with celestial fragrances. Her limbs were flawless, and her eyes were as restless and beautiful as those of a young deer.

When she saw her husband, the King, approaching, she rose from her seat in haste and modesty. Seeing him travel-worn from severe penance, his body covered in dust and his clothes soiled, she stood before him with a humbled face.

Seeing his beloved Kirtida—she of the wide eyes, shapely form, and complexion like molten gold—the King placed that excellent, divine Egg into her hands. The Queen took the Egg in her arms and, looking at its brilliance, was struck with great wonder.

That Egg possessed various divine fragrances, was filled with all powers, and shone like ten million suns. Even as she watched, the Egg suddenly divided into two.

Immediately, a sacred and enchanting breeze began to blow. The ten directions cleared, the rivers and lakes became serene, and the minds of all living beings were suddenly filled with joy. The sky became spotless, and the planets moved into auspicious positions. Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, and Nagas gathered in the heavens.

Brahma continued: At that moment, Vishnu, Shiva, the Vishwadevas, and the Ashwini Kumars arrived. The planets, stars, spirits, the forty-nine winds, and the ancestors (*Pitrs*) appeared. Sages, Manus, the four Vedas, and the fourteen

branches of knowledge took personified forms and arrived in their respective vehicles, armed and adorned, filling the sky.

As the auspicious moment of Kirtida becoming a mother arrived, the Gandharvas began to play music and the Apsaras sang. The minds of the righteous were purified. In the auspicious month of Chaitra, on the ninth day (*Navami*) of the bright fortnight (*Shukla-paksha*), under a favorable star and a holy constellation, the Supreme Goddess—not born of a womb—manifested in the lap of Kirtida, just as the moon rises in the eastern sky to the joy of all.

(Note: While this text mentions Chaitra, in other accounts like the Padma Purana, her appearance is celebrated in the month of Bhadra on the eighth day of the bright fortnight.)

The Form of the Infant Radha

She appeared with the brilliance of red lightning, the source of all auspiciousness. Her body was adorned with necklaces, armlets, a crown, and various jewels. Her limbs shone like ten million suns, delighting the eyes and the mind. She wore divine garlands and was anointed with heavenly scents.

She manifested in an eight-armed form (*Ashtabhuja*). Her eyes were wide, and a crescent moon graced her forehead. In her eight hands, she held a sword (*Kripan*), a conch, a discus, a mace, a club (*Mushala*), a spear (*Shakti*), and the gestures of fearlessness and boons.

When Kirtida beheld this daughter—the Mother of the Universe and the beloved of Vishnu—she realized through the King's previous penance that this was no ordinary child. The eternal, universal Goddess had manifested as her daughter.

The Queen, seeing her daughter clothed in wonder and possessing flawless limbs, sent word to the King through her attendants to inform him of the birth. Maharaja Vrishabhanu was saturated with joy upon hearing the news; a wave of bliss surged through his entire body.

In his great happiness, the King began to give bountiful gifts to the people for the pleasure of the Lord. He distributed wealth, clothes, jewels, blankets, and

deer-skins. By the thousands, he gave rubies, garments, cows, villages, horses, and elephants. He donated carts filled with weapons, donkeys, camels, buffaloes, goats, and jars filled with curd and clarified butter. He gave heaps of rice and grains to the Brahmins, the poor, the blind, the elderly, and children.

Hearing the news of the princess's birth, dancers, artisans, sweet-voiced singers, and thousands of musicians, along with poets and bards, arrived at the city of Vrishabhanu in a grand celebration.

Brahma said to Angiras: O twice-born! The singers began to sing in sweet melodies, the dancers danced, and the musicians played their instruments. Filled with great joy, the bards recited auspicious hymns praising the glory of the King. Observing this, the King was filled with supreme happiness and bestowed fitting wealth upon them all.

Hearing the news that a daughter with every auspicious mark had been born to the King, people of all four orders—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras—along with master artisans and citizens from the countryside and the city, adorned themselves with diverse ornaments. They thronged to the royal palace, eager to behold the infant.

King Vrishabhanu felt himself to be completely fulfilled and successful. He considered his penance and his very life to have attained their ultimate purpose. Surrounded by his kinsmen and placing the Brahmins at the lead, the King approached the inner chambers to see his daughter’s face. He had the Brahmins perform the *Svasti-vachana* (auspicious invocations) for the birth ceremonies.

The priests, according to the sacred rites, established the sacrificial fire with consecrated mantras and worshipped the fire-god with offerings of clarified butter. Accompanied by ministers, citizens, bards, and those skilled in music and song, the King proceeded, observing the dances of the performers.

Adorned in exquisite robes and anointed with fragrant pastes and garlands, and surrounded by thousands from every caste, the King sat in the inner assembly. He shone like a second Indra seated in the heavenly assembly surrounded by the Maruts.

The Vision of the Mother of the Universe

Knowing that the King had arrived with his kinsmen, Queen Kirtida, her lotus-like eyes blooming with joy, spoke these words to the King: "O King of kings! Behold your daughter, the granter of sons, the enchantress of the three worlds, who has been born for your ultimate liberation. She has manifested through our penance for the welfare of all beings and to remove the burden of the earth from the wicked Kshatriyas."

Hearing these words, the King's face bloomed like a lotus. With a humble mind and folded hands, he prostrated himself on the ground before the Goddess. With eyes brimming with tears of joy and a voice choked with emotion, the King, who was skilled in speech, addressed the Mother of the Universe.

Vrishabhanu said: O Mother! O wide-eyed one adorned with wondrous jewels! Who are you? I do not know your true essence. Please, out of compassion, reveal your identity to me.

The Goddess said: O Father! Know me to be the Supreme Power (*Para-shakti*) who takes shelter in Narayana. I have been worshipped by you through severe penance and rigorous vows. I am the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe. I grant the fruits of men's desires. I am known as *Mula-prakriti* (Primordial Nature), the source of Virtue, Wealth, Desire, and Liberation. Know me as the one who resides in the hearts of all and the one who carries souls across the ocean of worldly existence. Out of the power of your devotion, I have taken birth in your home to perform my divine play and to subdue the wicked.

Vrishabhanu said: O Mother! O Ishwari! If you have taken birth in my home out of your own mercy and play, then I consider it the result of my great past merits. I have beheld your form, which is sought by the gods and which grants supreme liberation. O Ishwari! If you are merciful toward me, show me your Maheshwari form (the Great Goddess). I bow to you.

The Manifestation of the Universal Forms

The Goddess said: O Father! I grant you divine vision. Behold my incomparable form. Cast aside all doubts and see my essence, which contains all the gods.

Brahma said: Having spoken thus to her father, the Goddess granted him supreme knowledge and revealed her divine Maheshwari form.

She appeared with a crescent moon upon her head, radiant like ten million spotless moons. She held a trident and granted boons. Her head was adorned with matted locks. She possessed five faces, each with three eyes. She was draped in a tiger skin and an elephant skin. Adorned with the King of Serpents, she appeared fierce like the fire of cosmic destruction. Beholding this terrifying and magnificent form, Vrishabhanu was struck with awe. The Goddess then said, "O Father! Do not be afraid. I am showing you my other forms. Behold!"

In an instant, she revealed another form: wide-eyed and beautiful, radiant as a hundred moons, illuminating all directions. She was adorned with necklaces, armlets, a crown, and a garland of forest flowers (*Vanamala*). Her lotus-like hands held the conch, discus, mace, and lotus. Her face was serene, her nose beautiful, and her eyes shone with the light of Lakshmi. She wore white garments and white garlands. Her lotus feet were worshipped by Brahma and Indra.

Then, the Goddess revealed the form of the Supreme Lord (*Bhagavat-svarupa*). This form possessed a thousand arms, a thousand eyes, a thousand heads, and a thousand faces. It was adorned with a thousand earrings and draped in a thousand garments. In its thousand hands, it held maces, swords, spears, and various weapons. This form, which destroys the demons, shone with the light of a thousand crowns of Indra.

Beholding this supreme and terrifying majesty, the King prostrated himself on the ground. With folded hands, he spoke to the Beloved of Hari, desiring to see the form his heart truly longed for.

Vrishabhanu said: O Mother! Having seen this wondrous and terrifying divine majesty, I am filled with fear. Please, show me another form. O Goddess! I bow to you. I am poor of intellect and distressed; show me the form of the one who wears the forest garland (*Vanamali*), the form that delights the heart.

Brahma said: Hearing the King’s humble prayer, the Goddess Radha withdrew her universal form (*Vishva-rupa*) and assumed another enchanting form.

The Vision of the Enchanting Gopala

She appeared with a complexion dark like a fresh rain-cloud. A garland of forest flowers swayed upon her chest, which was marked by the Srivatsa sign. She possessed two arms and was adorned with the Kaustubha gem. Her form was marked by divine signs and she held a flute. She stood gracefully with a gentle bend, and was accompanied by the hosts of cowherds.

Her face resembled a freshly blossomed lotus, serene and radiant. Her feet, which dispel the fears of worldly existence, were worshipped by beings such as Brahmā and others. She was honored by Nanda, Sunanda, and other elders, and her limbs were adorned with auspicious marks and ornaments.

Her form stood in the threefold-bending posture, illuminating all directions with her radiance, like the brilliance of the sun dispelling darkness. She destroyed the ignorance dwelling in the hearts of beings. Adored by gods and perfected beings, praised by sages, and surrounded by cowherds and companions, she appeared in the delightful guise of a cowherdess, captivating all with her incomparable beauty and grace.

Having beheld that supreme and transcendental form, Vrishabhanu was overwhelmed, and his senses became agitated. His lotus-like consciousness bloomed with realization, and he became firmly established in the path of yoga. Through divine knowledge, he recognized the Goddess standing before him as the Highest Reality.

As the King of kings, Vrishabhanu prostrated himself on the ground with a bowed head and began to praise the Mother of the Universe, who removes the burden of the earth, grants liberation to mankind, and is the cause of all living beings.

Vrishabhanu said: O Queen of the Universe! I bow to your lotus feet, which are worshipped with all rituals by the Lord of the Universe himself. O Mother of the World! There is no other object in this world besides you. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are but forms of you. Grant me your grace and consider me your own servant.

Brahma said: O Giver of Boons! O Empress of the Universe! You are the creator. You are the Supreme Power. O Goddess of inconceivable character! Your wondrous form is worshipped by the masters of the gods; how can I, with my limited speech, describe your true essence?

You are the *Svaha* that satisfies the gods in the fire, and you are the *Svadha* that satisfies the ancestors. You reside in heaven, you are the form of the gift of heaven, and you are the granter of the fruits of all sacrifices.

O Goddess! The sages who possess the eye of knowledge say your subtle form is composed of Brahman. O Mother! Your greatness is beyond the reach of the mind and cannot be described by speech.

O Mother! You are the seed of the three worlds. I bow to you, who creates, sustains, and dissolves the universe. You shine with the brilliance of the sun and moon, wielding various weapons such as the sword, conch, mace, and lotus.

O Maheshwari! This enchanting and beautiful Maheshwari form you have assumed is the supreme object of worship. It is as cooling as a thousand moons. I bow to you, O Mother of the three worlds, who possesses three eyes like the rising sun and is adorned with spotless ornaments.

O Mother of the Great Ishwara! Your Maheshwari form, achieved through perfect yoga, ensures that those who behold it are never born again into this world. That form, as steady as a mountain and adorned with serpents, shines with five faces.

I bow to your incomparable and majestic form, O Mother, which is adorned with three eyes, a crescent moon on the forehead, and matted hair. This form, which destroys the miseries of existence, is inconceivable even to Shiva and the other gods.

I bow to your auspicious Vaishnava form. With eight arms holding the mace, lotus, conch, and discus, you bewilder the entire world with the light of your body. Your neck is graced by the Kaustubha gem, and your chest is marked with the *Srivatsa*. I bow to this form with its smiling face and lotus feet cherished by your devotees.

O Mother! Your form, radiant like a fresh blue lotus, enchants the three worlds with its loveliness. Your eyes are like blooming lotuses. You are dressed in wondrous garments and jewels, with a gentle smile on your face.

I bow to you, who wears armlets and earrings, and whose forest-garland form is worshipped by the gods and the best of men. By taking shelter of your lotus feet, the mind and the senses find rest. Therefore, I, the infinite servant, bow to your lotus feet.

O Mother! Your forms, names, and qualities are endless. Who in this world is capable of describing them? You are beyond the reach of the Vedas and the mind; even the gods in their meditations cannot easily perceive you.

O Mother of the World! You assume these forms to bewilder the world and for the benefit of mankind. Whether as a mortal or a goddess, who in this universe has the power to describe your true nature?

O Goddess! Even the masters of yoga, practicing for thousands of ages, cannot see you. How then can I, a lowly human, describe your essence? O Mother! O Giver of Boons! You have bound me with the cord of your own Maya; this is my only prayer.

O Queen of the Universe! I bow to your lotus feet, which are worshipped by the Lord of the Universe. I am blessed and fulfilled in these three worlds. Who is equal to me, for I have drunk the nectar of your lotus feet with my eyes?

O Goddess! Since I have drunk from this source which severs the bonds of worldly existence, I know your merciful glance is upon me. Therefore, my prayer is that my mind may always remain merged in you, the stainless and attribute-less Brahman.

O Mother! I consider my life successful because I have tasted the nectar of your lotus feet with my eyes. Since you, the abode of mercy, have come near me, the supreme state of liberation is no longer difficult to attain.

O Goddess, full of majesty and the giver of liberation! Please forgive my terrible sins. By your Maya, you have descended into my home and brought joy to my

house. You have taken a human form to bewilder the gods, demons, and men, removing the defect of childlessness from my home.

To remove the burden of the earth and destroy the enemies of Indra, you have appeared in my house. O Mother! Who is your mother? Who is your father? Where is your birth? For you are the Mother of the Universe, and Brahma, Indra, and Shiva are born from you.

Cease this pretense of calling us 'father' and 'mother.' You are the Mother and Father of all in these three worlds. I bow to your lotus feet, which are worshipped by the Lord of the Universe, and ask that you be pleased with me.

I bow to you as you stand before me, and I bow to you from behind, O Giver of Boons! What shall I say of my fortune? Out of your compassion, you have taken birth in my home.

O Goddess! Just as a clear crystal appears red when placed near a red flower, so does this world appear through the light of your consciousness.

Brahma said: My son! Having thus praised the Supreme Goddess repeatedly, the King, with a heart full of devotion and a voice choked with emotion, spoke these words.

Vrishabhanu said: Please withdraw this supernatural and transcendental form, which is difficult even for yogis to behold. O Soul of the Universe! I bow to you. What can I say of Kirtida’s fortune? By the merit of a hundred births, she has become the mother of you, the Mother of the three worlds.

Brahma said: O son! Hearing the King's compassionate prayers, the Goddess, her face like a blooming lotus, began to shed small tears from her lotus-like eyes and spoke slowly to her father.

The Goddess said: O Father! To establish the path of the householder, you and Mother Kirtida worshipped me with severe penance. Because I was worshipped by you, O King, I have taken birth as your daughter. I have shown you all my forms to give you faith. This entire universe is pervaded by me, just as the sky pervades all

things. As butter exists within milk, so do I pervade the world; I am the Mother of the Universe, and the world exists in me as I exist in the world.

Brahma said: Having spoken thus to her father, the Goddess covered herself with her Maya once more. Like an ordinary infant girl, she placed her thumb in her mouth and began to cry for milk.

She appeared with the complexion of a blooming pomegranate flower, radiant as a thousand suns, and possessed the most enchanting beauty. There was no beauty like hers in the entire world; she appeared as the most beautiful girl in all her limbs.

O best of sages! Of all the forms that have been, that are now, or that shall ever be in these three worlds, none shall ever equal the beauty of this form.

Then Maharaja Vrishabhanu, the best among men and possessed of great wisdom, performed the *Jatakarma* (birth rites) and other ceremonies for his daughter through Brahmins who were knowers of the Vedas.

Brahma said: O Sage! Because the Supreme Goddess, the object of all worship, had been constrained (*Aradhita*) to appear by your severe penance, her father Vrishabhanu named her **Radha**.

Thus ends the eighth chapter, titled "The Birth of Radhika," in the Brahma-Saptarshi conversation within the Radha-Hridaya section of the Shri Brahmanda Mahapurana.

Chapter Nine: The Curse of Sanat-Kumara upon Goloka

Angiras said: O Lord of Yoga! O Ishwara of the Masters of Yoga! O Creator! Having heard of the birth of Radhika, I ask: for what reason was the resplendent realm known as Goloka cursed?

O Lotus-born one! Why did your son, the great sage Sanat-Kumara, curse the divine abode? Where was Lord Hari, and what did He do to provoke such an intense curse from the sage? Even if it is a profound secret, gurus reveal such

things to a devoted disciple. My thirst for the nectar of the stories of Hari is never satisfied; the more I hear, the more I wish to listen.

Brahma replied: O son! Know that the heart of one who does not meditate upon the eternal Radha—who is Consciousness itself—is like a pit of filth. On this earth, the legs of a man that do not travel to her holy places are as useless as the roots of a tree. The hands that do not worship the lotus feet of Radhika, which are adored by Narayana, Shiva, and myself, are like the hands of a corpse.

O best of Brahmins! What is the use of ears that do not drink the nectar of the Lord's qualities and pastimes? They are merely holes. Those eyes that do not constantly drink the beauty of the Lord’s lotus feet are as meaningless as the "eyes" on a peacock's feather—they have form but no sight.

Brahma continued: Listen, O best of sages. To fulfill the desire of the righteous, I shall tell the story of Hari’s birth and deeds. To obtain the worshipful Radha, the enchantress of the universe, Lord Narayana performed the most difficult penances.

To protect Ganga, the best of rivers and daughter of Himalaya, from the jealousy of Lakshmi and Saraswati, Narayana hid her within his own body. Though the Lord lived happily with his consorts—Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Viraja—Radha, who is the Supreme Maya and the soul of the universe, was dearer to Him than life itself.

Once, Lord Hari was enjoying the company of Viraja. When Radha heard of this from her companions (*Sakhis*), her eyes turned red with fury. Accompanied by her friends, she set out for that place.

As Radha hurried toward where Hari, the Lord of Yoga, was staying, the earth with its oceans trembled at every step she took. The mountains, forests, cities, and celestial beings—Devas, Asuras, Yakshas, and Rakshasas—all shook with fear. Seeing this, the terrified Devas fled to Kailasa, where Lord Shiva resides.

Shiva, knowing the cause, led the Devas to Goloka. Arriving at the gates, they began to praise the incomparable power of Govinda. Radha called upon the gods and entered the inner palace. Seeing Krishna seated with Viraja, she spoke in anger:

"O Shatha (deceiver)! While I am alive in Goloka, you dare commit such a wicked act? You have practiced such treachery against me! Go now from this Goloka with this beloved of yours who fulfills your desires, O lewd one!"

Hearing these words and seeing Radha's rage, Viraja immediately used her yogic power and transformed herself into a river.

She became thirty-six *yojanas* wide and a hundred *yojanas* long, flowing downward and uprooting the trees of the earth. From that day, O wise one, she has been known on earth as the Viraja River.

Then the celestial sages, Gandharvas, Nagas, and Kinnaras, along with myself (Brahma), Vishnu, Shiva, and Indra, stood before the Lord. With tearful eyes and hair standing on end, we began to praise the Supreme Person.

We saw Lord Krishna, the Supreme Brahman and the cause of all causes, seated upon a throne made of priceless gems. He was being served by Gopalas with white fans (*chamaras*), and He was watching the dances and songs of the Gopis with a smiling face.

He was surrounded by billions of cowherds. His entire body was anointed with sandalwood paste and adorned with jeweled ornaments. He appeared in the form of a cowherd boy, about twelve years of age, dark like a fresh rain-cloud, wearing yellow silk garments.

His brilliance was as cooling as ten million moons. His chest bore the *Srivatsa* mark. He was the abode of a beauty that surpassed ten million Cupids. The Gopis looked upon His smiling face with great longing.

There, the Devas, Munis, and Siddhas—whose sins had been burnt away by penance—beheld the Lord. Radha, dearer than life, sat upon His chest, and He was eating the fragrant betel nut (*tambula*) she offered Him. Filled with wonder, the gods looked at me, and after consulting each other, they spoke to me.

I then conveyed their thoughts to Jagannatha (the Lord of the World). At my words, Lord Krishna looked to his right toward Vishnu, and after a moment, He began to speak in a voice as sweet as nectar.

Upon hearing the King's desire, Lord Jagannatha spoke to Brahma.

Brahma said to Angiras: My son, hearing their prayers, I remembered Lord Vishnu and stood before Him. Then, Sri Krishna, seeing me to His right, spoke in words as sweet as nectar.

The Creation of the Goloka Abode

Sri Krishna said: "O Brahma! Let the instruments play. Let the celestial Apsaras dance. Let Lord Shiva sing melodious songs for My pleasure."

Brahma continued: O sinless Angiras! In that great festival of Rasa, which brings joy to all beings, Sri Krishna dispelled Radha's anger and divided His own divine form into many.

He expanded Himself into hundreds of forms, each equal in beauty, grace, generosity, and sweetness. Each form was two-armed, holding a flute, and adorned with a forest garland (*Vanamala*). Each wore a peacock-feather crown, and their chests were illuminated by the radiance of the Kaustubha gem. In every quality—age, beauty, strength, and splendor—these hundreds of forms were identical.

Seeing Him expand thus, the enchantress of the universe, Radha, also divided herself into a hundred forms. These forms, along with the Gopis born of Radha's own essence, joined Sri Krishna to begin the magnificent Rasa festival, filled with every divine sentiment (*Rasa*).

The Lord, the enemy of Madhu, entwined His arms with the arms of the Gopis and began to dance. The Gopis danced with Krishna, moving gracefully in every direction. Krishna, the infallible one, danced in their midst, embracing and kissing the lotus-like faces of the Gopis. He shone like the moon surrounded by stars in the vast sky.

Though the Lord is technically beyond attributes (*Nirguna*) and desireless, He appeared radiant in this amorous form out of love for Radha. He offered fragrant chewed betel nut (*Tambula*) to the Gopis, appearing between every two Gopis in the dance.

The Melting of the Divine Couple

During this festival, Saraswati, the Goddess of speech and knowledge, took her sweet-sounding Veena in her hands and began to play.

Brahma said: I began to play the *Mridanga* drum. Lord Vishnu, the destroyer of enemies, took up the *Panava* (stringed instrument). Lord Shiva, the master of all knowledge, began to sing the glories of the Rasa-Lila, accompanied by the Gandharva Tumburu and his own attendants like Bhairava.

The music of Shiva, with its perfect melodies and rising notes, was so profound that the Nagas, Devas, Asuras, Gandharvas, and all the sages fell into a trance. The Yakshas, Rakshasas, and Munis became still as statues, losing all external consciousness. The entire Rasa-mandala appeared like a painted picture, silent and motionless under the spell of Saraswati's Veena and Shiva's song.

As they listened to the extremely delicate and sweet melodies of Shiva's song, a miraculous event occurred: Sri Radha and Sri Krishna suddenly melted into water.

That water, as clear as crystal, began to pervade the entire realm of Goloka. Seeing this, Indra and the other Devas cried out in alarm, "Alas! What has happened?"

Bewildered, they lamented, "The power of God's deeds is incomprehensible! We cannot understand how His form, glory, and qualities have transformed. Where have the forms of Krishna and Maheshwari Radha gone? Where is the Rasa-mandala? From where has this water come that now floods all of Goloka?"

The Prayer of the Devas

Struck with wonder by this divine act, the Devas began to pray to Radha and Krishna.

The Devas said: "O Krishna! O Vasudeva! Refuge of all beings! Attribute-less, peaceful, and beloved of Radha, we bow to you. Brahma, Shiva, and Indra meditate upon Your lotus feet day and night; we bow to You again and again. You are the cause of creation, sustenance, and destruction. You are the father of Brahma. We bow before You.

The followers of the Madhyandina branch of the Yajur Veda call You the Supreme Brahman who existed before all else. To that eternal Brahman, we bow. You are the One from whom the universe is born and into whom it dissolves. You are the Word-Brahman (*Shabda-Brahman*) and the Supreme Brahman beyond it. Through the two types of knowledge—*Para* (transcendental) and *Apara* (intellectual)—You are known.

The Upanishads declare You to be 'One without a second.' You are the eternal Person, both manifest and unmanifest. We praise You, the imperishable Purusha."

The Response of the Lord

Satisfied by these sweet and profound prayers, Lord Krishna addressed the Devas. His voice was as deep and resonant as a rain-cloud.

Sri Krishna said: "O Devas! Be at peace. Do not be afraid of My deeds. I was merely testing your faith. Cast away your anxieties."

Brahma said: Hearing the bodiless voice of the Lord, the Devas, led by Shiva, became joyful. Their faces bloomed like lotuses, and their minds were pacified. They addressed the lotus-eyed Krishna with great humility.

The Devas said: "O Bhagavan! You are the Lord of all Masters of Yoga. It is not surprising that You perform such wondrous deeds. Your power, which grants both prosperity and liberation, is beyond the logic of ordinary beings. Who can truly know Your conduct, which is beyond the reach of mind, speech, and action?"

The Reappearance of the Lord

The Devas said: "O Lord! Your greatness is beyond the reach of human speech, mind, and action. You are beyond the senses. Who can truly know Your cosmic deeds? If You have mercy upon us, Your devotees, please show Yourself to us. We are distressed by Your absence."

Brahma said to Angiras: O Brahmin! Hearing the prayers of the Devas, the Lord, whose movements are invisible, suddenly manifested His form, which is saturated with divine love.

He appeared with a complexion like a fresh rain-cloud, His chest adorned with a forest garland (*Vanamala*). Within His heart resided Sri Radha. This form, enchanting to the eyes, shone brilliantly. He wore a peacock-feather crown, had a gentle smile on His moon-like face, and held a flute in His two arms. The music of His flute, with its sweet melodies and rising notes, enchanted everyone's mind.

He was gazed upon by millions of joyful Gopalas and Gopis, praised by sages like Narada, and surrounded by His eternal attendants like Sunanda and Nanda. Seeing Him, the Devas attained supreme and incomparable joy.

The Arrival of Sanat-Kumara and the Curse

At that moment, the great yogi Sanat-Kumara, the son of Brahma, arrived in Goloka. Though he appeared to be a five-year-old child, he was a master of divine knowledge. He was accompanied by hundreds of disciples and grand-disciples, all of whom were masters of the Vedas, Vedantas, Puranas, and Agamas.

These sages moved with the speed of the wind. Though they were wise, they possessed a fierce brilliance like the summer sun. Their bodies were emaciated from penance, with skin clinging to their veins and eyes deep in their sockets. They wore deer skins and carried water-pots (*Kamandalus*) and staffs. Their foreheads were marked with tilak, and they constantly chanted the name of Narayana.

Sanat-Kumara, desiring to see Sri Krishna, approached the gates of the inner palace and spoke sweetly to the gatekeepers (*Pratiharis*): "May you be blessed! We wish to see the Lotus-eyed Krishna, who is dark like a rain-cloud and has taken a form to bless His devotees. Grant us passage."

The Gatekeepers replied: "O Brahmin-sage! At this moment, the Lord is in a private place with Radha. No one can see Him now. Please rest for a moment; you may see the Lord when He emerges."

Sanat-Kumara said in anger: "O fools! I must see Him now. Stand aside!" He attempted to enter by force.

When the gatekeepers blocked him with their staffs (*Vetra*), the sage’s anger doubled. "I cannot tolerate even a moment’s delay in seeing Sri Krishna! Give way,

or I shall curse you and this entire city, O lowly ones! You do not know the power of my penance."

The gatekeepers, seeing his terrifying rage, pleaded: "O Lord! O lover of the poor! Please have mercy. Rest here a while to remove your fatigue and then enter. Do not be angry with mere servants."

Sanat-Kumara replied: "Those who are blinded by pride and consider themselves wise and powerful are not worthy of mercy!"

Brahma said: His eyes turned red with fury and his lips trembled. He took water from his *Kamandalu* and pronounced a terrible curse:

"O wicked ones! You are intoxicated by the pride of your position. Even though you possess celestial splendor, you have become arrogant. Therefore, you—along with your Lord and all the inhabitants of this palace—shall fall from Goloka to the earth and be born as mortals!"

Having uttered this dreadful curse, the sage, who was like a blazing fire, departed with his disciples.

The Signs of Calamity in Goloka

As soon as the sage departed, the great city of Goloka began to tremble. Ominous signs appeared: the sky rained blood, fierce winds blew, and though it was not the time for an eclipse, the sun and moon were swallowed by Rahu.

The inhabitants of Goloka felt their strength, splendor, and enthusiasm vanish. Their joy disappeared, and they felt as if their very life-force was draining away. Terrified, they all hurried to Lord Sri Krishna to report these calamities.

They prostrated themselves before His lotus feet with folded hands. The Lord, knowing everything—from Sanat-Kumara's arrival to the pronouncement of the curse—sighed deeply and then, smiling, addressed His devotees.

Sri Krishna said: "O best of immortals! I know everything. The destruction caused by the sage's curse is unavoidable. You must all go to the earth now. Be born among the Yadus, Vrishnis, and Andhakas. Take birth in the families of the

Kurus, Panchalas, and other noble lineages. The words of the sage must come true."

"While on earth, remain devoted to Me. Speak of My pastimes, meditate upon My form, chant My names, and always listen to the stories of My divine qualities."

The Lord's Instructions and the Descent to Earth

Sri Krishna said: "Always remain in the company of My devotees and remain devoted to the service of My feet. By My command, all shall become learned in all scriptures and the best among all archers; this shall not be otherwise.

Being invincible to Devas, Daityas, Yakshas, Rakshas, and Nagas, and having spent some time there, you all shall return again to My abode of Goloka.

O dear friends! Why do you indulge in sadness and grief now? What benefit can come from such distress? The infallible weapon of speech has been released by the sage who is like a supreme fire; there is no escape from it.

I, too, shall descend, being petitioned by Brahma, to destroy the burden of the earth and the hosts of wicked Kshatriyas. For the sake of removing the earth's burden, I, along with the self-controlled Arjuna, shall cause the complete destruction of the wicked Kshatriya forces.

The Gopis who are devoted to Me, and thousands of Gopalas who are devoted to Me, all shall take birth in the homes of cowherds in the prosperous Gokula.

O Devi Radha, who is dearer to Me than My own life! You also go to the earth. Your birth will take place in the house of Vrishabhanu, in the womb of Kirtida, in Nanda-Vraja."

Brahma said: Having thus commanded them all, their consciousness stricken with grief, the Lord sent a portion of Himself along with them to Gokula. The Lord Govinda, having sent them toward Gokula, remained silent for a moment, sighing, lamenting, and laughing.

Thereafter, all those high-souled ones, the self-controlled Vaishnavas, according to Krishna's direction, went to the earth and were born in the Kshatriya clans of Kuru, Vrishni, Yadu, Andhaka, Dasharha, Bhoja, and Bahlika.

In Gokula, thousands of Gopalas and Gopis were born. Radha, through her portions, appeared in Gokula as Vrinda and Tulsi. Furthermore, Devi Radha herself, being pleased by the penance of Katyayani, was born of Kirtida as one not born from a womb.

Through a portion of Krishna, Ayan was born from the womb of Jatila. Tilak and Durmada were the elder brothers of Ayan. They had two younger sisters, Kutila and Prabhakari. After some time, a younger daughter named Yashoda was born, who became the wife of the cowherd king Nanda.

Thus ends the ninth chapter titled "The Curse of Sanat-Kumara" in the conversation between Brahma and the Seven Sages in the Radha-Hridaya of the Shri Brahmanda Purana.

Chapter Ten: The Descent of Sri Krishna

Angiras said: O Brahma! O Lord! Be pleased with us. We wish to hear of the qualities of the Lord, His noble character, and the account of His birth and deeds. Tell us how the unborn, imperishable, and Supreme Soul Krishna took birth in the world of mortals.

Brahma said: O Sadhu! Your mind is pleased by the narration of the qualities of Sri Krishna of wonderful deeds; such a mind is righteous.

The Earth, oppressed by the burden of wicked Kshatriyas born from portions of demons, gradually went to the abode of Indra, weeping. Seeing her arriving and weeping, all the Devas, including Indra, became fearful and lost their enthusiasm. Seeing her in that state, Indra addressed the Earth.

Upendra (Indra) said: "O auspicious one! O beautiful Earth! Tell me the cause of your fear. Why are you weeping? O blameless one! Tell me the account exactly as it happened."

Dharani (Earth) said: "O sinless one! Those who are cruel, sinful, and mockers of religion have become kings on earth. I am unable to bear the burden of those wicked kings."

Hearing these words of the Earth, all the Devas went to Satyaloka where I (Brahma) reside happily. After they prostrated and worshipped me and told me of the Earth's sorrow, I went along with those Devas to Vishnu.

We went to the northern shore of the Ocean of Milk, where the Lord of All, Achyuta, lies upon the bed of Ananta in His universal form, enjoying the company of Lakshmi and Saraswati. There, having offered scents, garlands, and Arghya, we praised the Lord with distinct words. Then the Lord, being pleased, spoke to us in a voice as deep as a cloud, though He remained invisible.

Sri Krishna said: "I shall remove the burden of the earth. O Devas! Go and take birth on earth. Many of My devotees have already appeared in the Vrishni and Bhoja clans. I Myself shall take birth in the womb-chamber of Devaki, the wife of Vasudeva. O best of Devas! Cast away the fever of your mind. In the eighth womb of Devaki, I shall manifest Myself and remove the earth's burden. Ananta shall go first into the womb of Devaki and be known as Baladeva. Thereafter, I shall dwell in Gokula with Baladeva."

Having been thus commanded by the Lord, the Devas returned to their respective abodes with great joy.

Angiras said: O Lord of the World! We bow to your lotus feet. O Lord! Purify us with the excellent qualities of Vasudeva, which are like the waters of the celestial river. O Pitamaha! Tell us, the faithful ones who wish to hear, of His noble deeds and His birth.

Brahma said: In Mathura, there was a king named Shurasena of the Bhoja and Andhaka clans, who was a subduer of enemies, possessed of great splendor, vast fame, and great qualities. Mathura, Shurasena, the lands of Yamuna, Vraja,

Koshala, China, Vidarbha, the mountainous regions, the Yavanas, Kashi, and Gopura were under him. His capital was in Mathura.

To King Shurasena and his queen Adhara were born two sons, Devaka and Ugrasena, who were like the gods and the sacrificial fire. Both were high-souled, powerful, masters of all weapons, and learned in all scriptures. Ugrasena, the elder, ruled the kingdom according to the duty of a Kshatriya. Devaka married a princess of Koshala who was pure and virtuous.

Brahma said: O Sage! Ugrasena, the elder of the two, married Jayanti, the daughter of the King of Koshala. The radiant Devaka also married a virtuous and pure wife.

From the womb of Devaka's wife, the high-souled Devaki, who was like the mother of the gods, was born. Meanwhile, many sons and daughters were born to Queen Jayanti and King Ugrasena.

Among the sons of Ugrasena, the most wicked was Kamsa. He and his brothers were exceedingly powerful but possessed demonic natures. They were the slayers of gods and Brahmins and disruptors of sacrifices and holy rites.

O wise one! As Devaki reached marriageable age, King Devaka searched everywhere among the royal Kshatriya lineages for a suitable groom. However, he could not find a king who matched Devaki’s superior qualities and beauty. He then decided that he would offer his daughter even to a noble Kshatriya who was not a king, provided he possessed great virtues.

O Muni! Finding Vasudeva to be of excellent character, fame, and immense merit, and considering an old friendship as well as a divine decree, Devaka resolved to give his daughter to him. Inviting Vasudeva with due respect, he performed the wedding according to Vedic rites. As a dowry (*Paribarha*), Devaka gave many gifts to his son-in-law.

He gave two thousand maidservants adorned with gold necklaces, along with horses, elephants, foot soldiers, chariots filled with weapons, buffaloes, and donkeys. He also gave camels, sheep, goats, and garments made of their wool, along with precious ornaments of rubies, diamonds, and emeralds. Hundreds of

white umbrellas, fine clothes, and deerskin blankets were also presented by King Devaka to his daughter’s husband.

After the marriage rites were completed and offerings were made to the sacrificial fire, the sinless Vasudeva, having received blessings, mounted his chariot with his new bride to head for his own home.

The Celestial Voice and Kamsa’s Rage

Seeing Devaki departing, Ugrasena’s son Kamsa, out of affection for his sister, could not stay behind. With a joyful heart, he mounted the same chariot. To show his love, he took the reins himself and began to drive, comforting his sister who was weeping as she left for her father-in-law's house.

O Brahmin Angiras! As Kamsa drove the horses, a sweet yet thunderous celestial voice spoke from the sky, addressing him:

> "O wicked-minded Kamsa! Listen to these words meant for your ultimate benefit. The Supreme Lord, the unborn and imperishable Narayana, will manifest in the eighth womb of this Devaki to remove the burden of the earth. He shall take birth and surely slay you!"

Hearing this, the evil Kamsa was seized by terror. Without a second thought, he drew his sword and rushed to kill Devaki. Overcome by fury, he seized her by her hair. Seeing this, Vasudeva, deeply distressed, began to calm Kamsa with gentle and strategic words.

Vasudeva’s Counsel to Kamsa

Vasudeva said: "O best of kings! O subduer of enemies! You are known for your noble birth and prowess. This is your younger sister, like a daughter to you, a helpless woman and a bride. To kill her now would bring you terrible and eternal infamy. It does not behoove a descendant of the Bhojas to commit such an act.

O King! I speak the truth: a person's life and death occur exactly at the day and moment decreed by the Creator. Death follows every living being from the moment of birth. For one who is born, death is certain; and for one who dies, birth is certain. This cycle turns like a wheel.

O best of kings! Whatever is destined to happen on a particular day, moment, or hour, will surely happen. It is futile to worry or try to prevent it; such anxiety only leads to confusion. You should not kill this Devaki, who is like a daughter to you.

O King! One should never kill the sick, the young, the elderly, a cow, a woman, a Brahmin, or a Guru—even if they are guilty of a hundred faults. To do so leads to eternal hell and infamy that lasts forever throughout the three worlds. Even death is better than performing an act that brings disgrace. You are born of a pious and heroic lineage; do not perform a deed condemned by the world. Have mercy on this poor girl, your sister."

Brahma said: Hearing these wise and beneficial words, the hero Kamsa became very troubled. Overcome by anxiety, he released Devaki and returned to his palace, no longer accompanying Vasudeva. Vasudeva, with a joyful heart, took his wife and proceeded to his own residence.

Narada’s Arrival at Kamsa’s Palace

In the meantime, the Devas, considering the welfare of the world and wishing for the speedy arrival of Sri Krishna, agreed to send the celestial sage Narada to Kamsa’s palace.

They said, "O Sage! Please go and influence Kamsa so that Lord Narayana takes birth quickly. This is the greatest service you can do for the Devas."

Being thus requested by Indra, Narada, who always seeks the benefit of the universe, made a special effort. Playing his Veena and singing the glories of Krishna, he arrived at the city of the Bhoja king, Kamsa, within half a moment.

Seeing the celestial sage arriving from the heavens, Kamsa rose from his throne. Feeling blessed and fulfilled, he worshipped the sage with water and offerings. Once Narada was comfortably seated, he addressed the king.

Narada said: "O King of men! The affection of a virtuous person for someone like me is expected. I am very pleased with your humble behavior and speech. O son! Listen to my words which are for your eternal benefit.

Know that those born in the Vrishni, Bhoja, Yadu, and Andhaka clans, as well as the Kurus, Panchalas, and others—and the cowherds in Gokula led by Nanda—are all celestial beings who have descended from Goloka to perform divine work. O King! Even the women like Devaki and Yashoda, and children like Shridama, are all divine.

Requested by Brahma, the lotus-eyed Madhusudana will take birth as the eighth child of Devaki specifically to remove the burden of the earth caused by demon-like Kshatriyas like yourself."

Narada said: "O King! Sri Krishna, taking birth in Devaki's womb, will not only destroy you but all kings of your nature. I tell you this now: do not delay in taking measures to prevent the destruction of your people."

Hearing these words, Kamsa became extremely anxious. He summoned all his ministers and priests, including the wicked Trinavarta and Baka, to deliberate on his welfare. Following the advice of his evil counselors, Kamsa usurped the throne by imprisoning his own father, Ugrasena, and declared himself king. He then seized Vasudeva and Devaki, binding them in iron chains within a dark dungeon. Furthermore, he imprisoned all those belonging to the Vrishni and Bhoja clans.

The Six Sons and the Divine Transfer

As Devaki gave birth to her first six sons in the prison, the cruel Kamsa heartlessly slaughtered each one. Then, Lord Narayana commanded Ananta (Shesha), who serves as His divine bed, to take birth as a portion of Himself in Devaki’s seventh womb. Obedient to the Lord’s command, the thousand-headed Ananta entered Devaki's womb like a lion entering a cave in Mount Sumeru.

Seeing Ananta enter the womb, and observing the distress of the Yadavas under Kamsa's tyranny, the Lord commanded Katyayani (Mahamaya): "O Mother! Draw Shesha out from Devaki’s womb and place him in the womb of Rohini in Gokula. You yourself shall then take birth from the womb of Yashoda."

Obeying the Lord, the auspicious Mahamaya pulled the fetus of Ananta from Devaki's womb in Mathura and placed it in the womb of Vasudeva’s other wife, Rohini, in Gokula. To the world, it appeared as if Devaki had suffered a

miscarriage. Neither the cowherds of Vraja nor Kamsa's spies could perceive this divine deception.

The Appearance of the Lord in the Womb

Following this, Lord Mukunda, the giver of liberation, entered the womb of Yashoda along with a portion of Mahamaya. This brought immense joy to the residents of Gokula, who celebrated seeing the wife of the Chieftain Nanda pregnant. Simultaneously, the Supreme Lord Vishnu, the Lord of Lakshmi, bearing the conch, wheel, and mace, manifested Himself within the "cave" of Devaki's womb in Mathura.

The Gathering of the Gods

Knowing that the Lord of immense prowess had entered the womb, the Devas, led by Brahma and Shiva, descended. Indra arrived on his elephant Airavata; Agni came with his wife Svaha. The guardians of the eight directions—Vayu, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, and Ishana—arrived with their followers. The Sun, the nine planets, the eight Vasus, and the celestial sages also gathered.

Sages such as Narada, Agastya, Bhrigu, Markandeya, and Parashurama (with his disciples) arrived. They were joined by Vishvamitra, Vyasa, Shukadeva, and Gautama. They all came with their wives, disciples, vehicles, and divine weapons. Utilizing their supreme yogic powers, they entered the subtle space of Devaki's womb to offer prayers to the Lord.

The Description and Prayer of the Devas

They beheld the Lord: His four lotus-like hands held the conch, wheel, mace, and lotus. He was dressed in yellow silk (*Pitambara*), with a face as radiant as a red lotus and a gentle smile. He wore a jeweled crown, necklaces, armlets, and earrings that illuminated His cheeks. On His chest shone the Kaustubha gem. His beauty surpassed ten million cupids.

The Devas prayed: "O Lord! We bow to the one with the lotus-navel and lotus-feet. You are the source of Brahma and the creator of all. We bow to Your

lotus-like face and Your lotus-arms. You are the sun that blooms the lotus-hearts of Your devotees.

O Hrishikesha! Lord of the senses! We bow to You, the controller and indweller of all perceptions. You are the protector of the righteous and the cause of their liberation. You are always worshipped by the holy and You follow them to protect them.

We bow to Govinda, the friend of the cowherd boys, the indestructible one. You are Yoga itself, reachable through Yoga, and the Lord of all Yogis. O protector of those who seek refuge! Save us, for You are our ultimate goal."

The Lord's Assurance

Brahma said: Hearing their prayers, the Primeval Lord Govinda, with eyes like red lotuses, smiled and spoke:

Bhagavan said: "O Devas! Do not fear in the least. My descent is for the very purpose of removing your terror. You shall soon regain your celestial positions. I have appeared to protect the steady-minded sages, destroy the enemies of the gods, and lighten the burden of the earth oppressed by demons. I am the imperishable and causeless Supreme Lord. Go back to your abodes in peace; I shall surely ensure your welfare."

Reassured by the Lord's words, the Devas bowed their heads and returned joyfully to their own realms.

The Birth of Balarama

After the Devas departed, in the auspicious month of Jyaishtha, on the eighth day of the bright fortnight (*Shukla Ashtami*), under the constellation of Mula (presided over by Yama), the supremely powerful Ananta was born from the womb of Rohini. He was known as Rama (Balarama).

At His birth, celestial flowers rained from the sky. The Devas played their drums in the heavens. The Gandharvas, led by Haha and Huhu, sang songs of praise, and the Apsaras danced in celebration of the Lord's appearance.

The Advent of Sri Krishna and the Great Storm

In the month of Bhadra, on the eighth day of the dark fortnight (*Krishna Ashtami*), while the Rohini constellation was in the sky, the Lord of Maya prepared to descend. Perceiving that the guards placed by Kamsa were vigilant, the Lord covered the entire sky with dark, thundering clouds.

Heavy rain began to fall as if the clouds themselves were hungry to bathe the Lord. Thunder crashed with such force that people were stunned, and the roars of the storm were terrifying. Frequent bolts of lightning illuminated the ten directions and the firmament.

A thick, impenetrable darkness enveloped the lakes, houses, mountains, palaces, and towers. It was so dark that one could not distinguish between a forest and a building. Massive walls and mountain peaks seemed to crumble under the force of the fierce winds. The crashing sounds of falling trees and buildings, combined with the panicked cries of chariots, horses, and elephants, echoed everywhere. The earth became invisible, hidden under the debris of the storm.

Torrents of rain, as hard as bricks, tormented all living beings. It appeared to everyone that the Pralaya (the dissolution of the universe) had arrived. Cattle, horses, camels, buffaloes, and humans were all harrassed by the wind and rain, convinced that the end of the age was at hand. There was no distinction between earth and sky, day and night, or morning and evening. In that total darkness, only the recurring flashes of lightning provided a glimpse of the chaotic world.

The Birth in Gokula and Mathura

In the middle of this dark, stormy night, the guards of the prison, overcome by the Yoga-maya of the Lord, fell into a deep and heavy sleep.

At that same moment in Gokula, Yashoda, the wife of King Nanda, entered the maternity chamber, afflicted by labor pains. She gave birth to two children simultaneously: a beautiful son and a daughter.

The Form of the Son in Gokula:

The son’s complexion was like a fresh dark rain cloud (*Navina-jalada-shyama*). He had a beautiful nose, charming cheeks, and perfectly aligned teeth and lips. His arms were long, adorned with a forest garland (*Vanamala*). He appeared with his divine attributes: the flute (*Venu*), the staff (*Vetra*), and the horn (*Vishana*). His face was as bright as a blooming red lotus, and his feet, worshipped by Brahma and Indra, possessed the radiance of ten million suns. His beauty surpassed ten million cupids (*Koti-kandarpa-lavanya*).

The Daughter in Gokula:

Simultaneously, a two-armed daughter was born, radiant like the rising sun. However, Yashoda, influenced by Mahamaya, only realized she had given birth to a son and did not perceive the daughter, as the Goddess kept herself hidden.

Nanda and Yashoda, recognizing the divine nature of the child, bowed their heads and began to pray. But the Lord of Maya soon covered them with his illusory energy, causing them to fall into a deep sleep along with the rest of the household.

The Appearance in Mathura

As the storm subsided in Mathura and the sky cleared, the Gandharvas sang and Apsaras danced once more. In the prison cell, Jagannath (Vishnu) appeared before Devaki and Vasudeva.

He manifested in his four-armed form, holding the Shanka (conch), Chakra (disc), Gada (mace), and Padma (lotus). He wore yellow garments and a forest garland. His face was serene, and his eyes were like blooming lotuses.

Seeing this divine form, Vasudeva was filled with joy. Realizing that the Supreme Lord had indeed been born in his home, he prostrated himself like a stick (*Dandavat*) on the ground and offered many prayers.

The Lord's Words to Vasudeva:

The Lord, the treasure of compassion, spoke to Vasudeva in a voice as deep as a cloud: "O Father! Know Me to be the fruit of your great penances performed in previous lives." After saying this, the Lord withdrew his majestic four-armed form and assumed the form of a natural infant.

The Exchange of Children

The Lord then instructed Vasudeva: "O Father! Take Me quickly to Gokula. Enter the maternity room of Yashoda in Nanda's house. Place Me there and bring her daughter back here to the prison."

Following this command, Vasudeva carried the infant Krishna to Gokula. He placed the Lord beside the sleeping Yashoda, took the newborn girl, and returned to the prison in Mathura.

Kamsa and the Goddess

As soon as Vasudeva placed the baby girl beside Devaki, the child began to cry. The guards woke up and immediately informed King Kamsa. Kamsa rushed to the prison, seized the child, and attempted to dash her against a stone.

Suddenly, the child slipped from his hands and rose into the sky, manifesting her true eight-armed form as the Great Goddess (Mahamaya). She mocked the cowering Kamsa, declaring that his destroyer had already been born elsewhere, and then she departed to her divine abode.

Thus ends the tenth chapter titled "The Birth of Sri Krishna" in the Radha-Hridaya of the Shri Brahmanda Purana.

Chapter Eleven: The Growth of Sri Radha in Vraja

Brahma said: "O Angiras! Listen to how the Great Goddess grew in the house of King Vrishabhanu after her birth. Like the digits of the autumn moon during the bright fortnight, she increased in beauty day by day.

With her sweet, half-articulated words, her graceful movements of hands and feet, and her enchanting smiles and dances, she completely captivated the hearts of her parents. Beholding her lotus-like face and her playful gestures, Kirtida and Vrishabhanu remained perpetually immersed in an ocean of bliss."

The Rescue of Kirtida from the Crocodile

Brahma continued: "One day, the noble Kirtida took her daughter Radha in her arms and, accompanied by her friends, went to the banks of the Yamuna (the daughter of the Sun) for a ritual bath. Arriving at the ghat, she handed Radha to a companion and entered the transparent waters of the Kalindi to bathe.

O Sage! Kirtida waded into the deep, swift-flowing waters which were turbulent with high waves. The river was filled with turtles, crocodiles, and various aquatic creatures. As she began to bathe, the splashing sound attracted a terrifying female crocodile. Enraged, the beast rushed toward the Queen and clamped its jaws onto her thigh.

Gripped by the predator, Kirtida cried out in intense agony: 'O friends! Save me! I have been seized by a terrible creature!' Hearing her screams, the companions were struck with terror. They looked in all directions but saw no man nearby who could help. Overwhelmed with despair, they began to weep, their clothes soaked by their own tears.

Some cried 'Hala!', some 'O Lord!', and others struck their foreheads, calling out to their parents and brothers. One maiden stood frozen with her finger on her nose in shock, too terrified even to touch the water. Others rolled in the dust, while some ran toward the palace to inform King Vrishabhanu. They lamented, 'O Queen! How can you leave us? How shall we survive without you? And how shall we ever raise this infant daughter who still relies on your milk?'"

The Manifestation of Radha's Divine Form

Brahma said: "Seeing the companions fainting and blinded by grief, the infant Radha—who is the primordial Mother of the Universe—immediately plunged into the bottomless depths of the Yamuna. In an instant, she assumed a terrifying and majestic form, glowing like the fire at the time of destruction.

She appeared as Ambika, the infinite Mother, wielding a sword (*Khadga*), a staff (*Khatvanga*), a club (*Parigha*), and other divine weapons. With the ease of one carrying a garland of flowers, she approached the beast. In her supreme wrath, she struck the wicked crocodile with her feet, dragged it to the shore, and severed its head with her sword.

O Angirasa! As the head fell, the impact was so great that the trees on the banks of the Yamuna shook and collapsed by the thousands. The very earth trembled. Even today, that terrifying body of the crocodile, now turned to stone, lies along the Yamuna, spanning fourteen yojanas."

The Liberation of Rambha

"Upon the death of the crocodile, the heavens opened. Devas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, and Sages rained fragrant flowers upon Sri Radha and sang hymns from the Vedas. Suddenly, from the carcass of the crocodile, a beautiful celestial woman emerged, adorned with divine ornaments and garments.

She ascended a celestial chariot and was fanned by hundreds of heavenly maidens. This lady approached Radha with deep devotion, worshipped her with flowers, and began to pray:

> 'I know You, O Mother of the Universe! You are the Supreme Ishwari, the Mother of all beings, unborn and eternal. You are the form of pure consciousness and bliss (*Chidananda*), the one who enchants the entire world.'

The woman, Rambha, explained: 'O Ambika! I was once the Apsara Rambha, but I was cursed by Sage Durvasa to take the form of a crocodile. By Your grace and the touch of Your feet, I am now liberated from that bestial body and have regained my celestial form. I bow to You!' Having said this, Rambha departed for her heavenly abode."

The Amazement of the Gopis

Having thus attained their own respective abodes, all the companions—freed from fear by the grace of the Devī—offered her humble words of praise and reverence in many different ways, their minds filled with devotion, and then departed for their homes. Witnessing this supremely wondrous and astonishing manifestation of Śrī Rādhikā, Kīrtidā and the other women were at that moment struck with overwhelming amazement. Their lotus-like eyes blossomed wide with wonder, and they stood motionless, absorbed in that sight. Beholding that extraordinary and utterly marvellous divine act, all of them bowed down in reverence. Their minds

were shaken with awe and devotion, and they stood with folded hands, offering repeated salutations.

Seeing Kīrtidā after she had been rescued, all the women were relieved of the exhaustion caused by fear. With minds filled with joy, they approached her, bowed down together, and, their hearts softened by affection, praised her again and again in many ways. Overcome with great delight, they burst into tears of happiness.

Śrī Rādhikā then manifested her divine play (*līlā*). Seeing this, all her companions gathered together joyfully. They embraced Rādhā to their chests, repeatedly kissed her lotus-like face, and, overcome with affection, spoke sweet and loving words. Some, imagining her as their own child, lifted her onto their laps; others, with tender care, wiped and caressed Rādhā's lotus-face in their respective ways.

Thereafter, all the women, filled with happiness and wonder, returned to their homes. Though their bodies were weary, their minds were satisfied and uplifted, having witnessed that extraordinary event.

The women, their hearts filled with joy, took Radhika and entered the city. They related in detail to King Vrishabhanu the entire account of her being seized by the crocodile, her rescue by Kirtida, her assuming a wonderful form, and the killing of the crocodile. They said, "O King! This daughter of yours is no ordinary human; she is the Mother of the World, the most worshipable, higher than the highest, the Supreme Nature herself."

Hearing these words, King Vrishabhanu remained silent, though he knew everything. He knew well that his daughter Radha is the Mother of the three worlds. However, fearing what people might say, he did not reveal her secret essence to anyone.

Hiding the truth of her nature, the King took Radha on his lap and began to comfort her, just as parents comfort a frightened child. He said, "Child! Why do you look so distressed and restless, with your body shrinking, sighing deeply and looking around in fear? Mother! Have no fear, have no fear. You are on my lap; what is there to be afraid of?" With such words of assurance, he began to console that faultless girl.

After thus comforting the girl, the highly renowned and noble-minded Vrishabhanu, seeking his own welfare and the welfare of all people, went to a holy temple. There, through Brahmanas learned in the Vedas, he worshipped Ambika, the Mother of the World, with various offerings and deep devotion.

Rambha's curse

Angiras said: "O Lord! O Lotus-born! It appears that we have been graced by you. Therefore, I ask: for what reason did Durvasa formerly curse the Apsara named Rambha? O Brahma! A great curiosity has arisen in our minds to know the cause of this; therefore, please relate it in detail out of your favor."

Brahma said: "Son Angiras! In a former age, in the delightful Nandan grove, the sage Bharadwaja was enjoying the company of the Vidyadhari Rambha. Hear what that Nandan grove was like: it was endowed with manifold qualities, surrounded by hundreds of Kalpa-trees, and filled with trees bearing fruits and flowers of all six seasons—summer, rains, autumn, late autumn, winter, and spring. The trees had steady shade and were adorned with new leaves and fresh branches; the garden was graced by gentle, fragrant, and cool southern breezes blowing here and there. It was filled with the charming humming of swarms of bees wandering from flower to flower and the sweet songs of cuckoos. It was adorned with the buzzing of bees attracted by the scent of blooming Parijata flowers. The place was kissed by the cool rays of the moon, serving as an abode for the god of love; it echoed with the pleasant, gentle sound of the ripples of the Mandakini river. At that time, there were no Nagas, Kinnaras, or Yakshas sporting with their beloveds there, nor anyone else present except for those wearing the garb of ascetics, whose hearts and bodies were struck by the arrows of Kamadeva."

“Among all Apsaras, Rambha is the best and a constant source of pleasure. O wise Angiras! Remaining in that Nandan grove, she daily provided delight through her songs and various skills.

Once, the great sage Durvasas was sporting with Rambha in that Nandan grove. The Apsara, filled with supreme joy, pleased Durvasas completely with her coquettish gestures, playfulness, and very sweet, indistinct whispers.

With fragrant betel leaves, sandalwood, and excellent food and drink, and through mutual embraces and touches of the hips, they both captivated each other's minds—submerged in the ocean of lust.

O Sage! That Rambha, adorned with nail marks and tooth marks, and decorated with various ornaments on her body, spent an entire year in sexual union with the great sage Durvasas.

By chance, at that time, King Indra, the enemy of Namuchi, arrived in that Nandan grove mounted upon his elephant, Airavata. Seeing the arrival of Indra, the Vidyadhari Rambha became anxious with fear and her body trembled violently.

Seeing her there in a secluded spot with Durvasas, Indra, the lord of the gods, became ablaze with great anger. Addressing Rambha, who stood in that solitary place, he said, "O wicked one! O unchaste woman! What is this you have done? Treating me as insignificant as a blade of grass, you had no fear at all in performing this improper act?"

Hearing those fearful and angry words of the King of the gods, Rambha, fearing a curse, immediately left the side of Durvasas and stood up. Then the great sage Durvasas, his desires unfulfilled, became extremely angry at Rambha's behavior and spoke these words.

"O unchaste one! As a result of this act, you shall remain in the form of a stone for one thousand years. And this wicked King of the gods, intoxicated by the pride of his wealth and power, has caused an obstacle to my meditation; therefore, he too shall soon be deprived of his splendor by my curse."

Both of them were greatly alarmed by the words of the sage, who was like a fire. Having spoken thus, the extremely powerful and brilliant Brahmana Durvasas immediately departed for his place of penance."

Thus ends the eleventh chapter, titled "The Growth of Sri Radha in Vraja," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twelve: War between the Devas and Rakshasas

Brahma said: "O Son! This was the cause of Rambha's curse. Now hear the further account of Radha. In the palace of King Vrishabhanu, which was filled with hundreds of priceless gems, emeralds, rubies, and diamonds, Radha was lying down to sleep."

One day, the Queen, mother of Radha, having left Radha to sleep in the private chamber, went slowly and affectionately with her companions to the garden to see the beauty of the forest.

O best of sages, Angiras! After Kirtida went to the garden, I (Brahma) arrived there with Saraswati, Mahadeva Shiva with Parvati, the imperishable Vishnu with Lakshmi, and the Guru of the gods, Brihaspati, with Tara, along with many sages, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, and great serpents. They all gathered in the bedchamber of Radha and began to pray to her, who is the crusher of the demons' pride and the mother of the world.

The Devas said: "Salutations to the one praised by the enemy of demons (Vishnu), the enemy of Smara (Shiva), and the Lord of Progeny (Brahma). O Devi! Salutations to you. You are the one who gave birth to Vishnu and Shiva. O crusher of demons, we bow to you."

"O Supreme Abode! Your lotus feet are worshipped by Murari. We bow to the lotus feet of you, who are worshipped by the mountains, the protector of the earth, and the bearer of the earth. Salutations to you."

"Salutations to the one whose lotus feet are worshipped by the slayer of the demon Andhaka. O best of the best, Kamala! O Devi, who are the form of the near and far shores, and the Empress of all shores, we bow to you."

"O ocean of mercy! You are the creator of the world, its sustainer, and the creator of both the creator and the sustainer. O Mother! The gods are now being scorched by the fire of the demons' pride; please become our refuge. O protectress of those who seek shelter! You are the Empress of all who deserve refuge. We bow to you."

Brahma said: "O Brahmanas! Listen. Having thus praised the Devi with great devotion and bowed their heads, the gods worshipped that Supreme Goddess, who is worthy of all worship, with various offerings."

"O Angiras! Hearing the prayers of all the gods, the Great Goddess Radha, the daughter of Vrishabhanu, whose lotus feet are worshipped by the Supreme Lord, spoke to us with a slight smile on her face."

The Devi said: "O noble-minded gods! You who enjoy your own respective authorities, why do I see your lotus-like faces so pale and faded? Why do you appear so poor, deprived of your beauty, lacking enthusiasm, devoid of strength, and seemingly breathless? Tell me the cause of this; it will be for your welfare. You are all experts in battle, yet why has this state befallen you? I wish to hear."

The Devas said: "O Empress of the world! The two demons named Roshana and Marshana, sons of Kalanemi who was formerly slain by Vishnu, are warriors of uncontrollable pride in battle. They have obtained boons and weapons from Shiva and are extremely powerful."

"O Devi! Those two wicked ones are of evil conduct, haters of gods and sages, with restless red eyes, and destroyers of all sacrifices. Being incredibly difficult to approach, they have defeated us in battle by their own strength and snatched away all our wealth."

"O Mother! Having defeated the gods, they are now enjoying the positions of Indra, Varuna, Chandra, Yama, Agni, Surya, as well as the realms of the Nagas, Nairrita, Ishana, and Kuvera."

"Taking our weapons, vehicles, and thrones, the followers of those two demons—all of great strength and prowess—have occupied every realm. Those two demon brothers, Roshana and Marshana, are seated upon the throne of Indra, ruling over all."

"O Mother! O Mother of the World! We have been cast out from our positions and are wandering the earth like mortal men among humans. Therefore, O Mother, we have come to you for refuge; please grant us protection."

Brahma said: "O Angiras! Hearing the words of the gods who had come for shelter, the Great Goddess spoke words that were beneficial, auspicious, and brought happiness to all."

The Devi said: "O best of the godly ones! To soothe the great heat of the distress in your minds caused by the demons, I speak these words which are like great medicine. Listen and do not worry; I shall go there and make a special arrangement for this."

"O immortals! By my word, you all go to their city or near its vicinity and challenge the two demons, Roshana and Marshana, to battle. Afterwards, I shall arrive there and easily ensure your welfare. Have no fear in this."

Brahma said: "O Angiras! Having thus instructed the gods, Sri Radhika, the enchantress of Sri Krishna's mind, placed her shadow-form upon the bed and personally departed from her house."

"O Angiras! According to the command of the Devi, the gods, who are difficult to conquer in battle, went near the city of the demons and stood there, challenging them to war with loud shouts."

"Hearing the challenge of the gods who desired war and the tumultuous noise of the armies, the demonic army—armed with great weapons—and the heroic generals of the demons emerged from the city, ready for combat."

"Millions upon millions of their chariots, elephants, and commanders came forth and joined the battle with the divine armies and their commanders. A horrific, hair-raising, and tumultuous war began."

"In the front of the battle, millions of demons engaged in duals with the gods. A fight began between King Indra and the demon-lords Roshana and Marshana."

"Bhaskara (*Surya*) quickly fought with the demon Trishina. The great-souled Shantirashmi engaged in a battle born of pride."

Bhaskara, the Sun god, acting with great speed, began to fight with the demon Viprachitti, while a terrible battle took place between the great-souled Tuhinikara (*Chandra*), the beloved of the lilies, and the demon named Dantana.

Kala fought with the demon named Kaleshvara; Hutashana (*Agni*) fought with Gokarna; Kuvera, the lord of Yakshas, with Kalakeya; and Vishvakarma engaged in battle with Mayadanava.

The destroyer Yama, the god of death, fought with Bhayankara; Varuna fought with Kalaviska; and the wind-god Samirana engaged in battle accompanied by Chanchalantaba.

The planet Budha, son of the Moon, fought with the demon named Svatadhvaya; the planet Shanaishchara, son of the Sun, fought with Raktaksha; Jayanta, the son of Indra, fought with the demon named Ratnasara; and the Vasus engaged in a great war with the hosts of demons named Varchas.

The two Ashvinikumara brothers met in a dual with Raktapundra and the demon Dhumra; Nalakubara, the son of Kuvera, joined them in combat. Dharma fought with the demon named Dhurandhara, and the planet Mangala, the son of the Earth, began to battle with Kotaraksha.

Ishanadeva began his fight with the demon named Pingalaksha, while Manmatha, the lord of Rati, fought with Pithara. Pavana began a battle with Gomukha, Vrishaksha, and Nala. Nandi fought with Shishumara, Pira, and Dhumra.

Vishnu fought with the heroes Varahavadana and Gandhavaha, while I (Brahma) fought with the demon general named Padma.

Bhava, Mahadeva, Shiva, himself began to fight with the demon-lord Vrishaparva. The eleven Rudras also engaged in combat with various other demons.

The goddess Mahamari, who commands the demon armies, fought with Ugrachanda and other goddesses; Nandishvara and other attendants of Shiva engaged in a terrible battle with the other hosts of Daityas and Danavas.

A fierce battle ensued between both sides using swords, pattishas, narachas, bhindipalas, tomaras, mudgaras, maces, parighas, scimitars, and weapons named vatsadanta and kshurapra.

They fought with small arrows, shakti spears, extremely dreadful nooses, and by uprooting trees and mountain peaks to strike one another.

Sitting upon their great thrones, the two demon-lords, Roshana and Marshana, watched that fierce battle. Hard-pressed by the demons who were experts in war, all the gods broke rank and began to flee.

Defeated and swiftly wounded all over by the arrows of the demons, the gods were unable to ward off the weapons of the superior demon warriors.

Thus ends the twelfth chapter titled "The Commencement of the War between the Gods and Demons" in the Radha-Hridaya of the Uttar-khanda of the Shri Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Thirteen: The Slaying of the Demons Roshana and Marshana

Brahma said: "O Son! After the divine armies were defeated by the demon forces, the immensely powerful Kartikeya, the son of Shiva, gathered a terrible rage. He advanced toward the battlefield with great speed, making the string of his supreme Indra-given bow (Aindra-dhanu) twang loudly."

"Entering the battlefield, the great commander, born among the reeds, first reassured Indra and all the other gods, saying: 'O gods, experts in war! Why are you unnecessarily afraid? While I am present, what is there to fear?'"

"Saying this, the heroic son of Shiva, in great anger, made his bow circular and began to rain down a network of arrows upon the enemy forces, just as clouds pour down incessant streams of water during the rainy season. Under that assault, the enemy's chariots were shattered into pieces. Elephant-warriors with their elephants, cavalry with their horses, and infantry soldiers were slain and lay continuously upon the surface of the earth. Cutting through shields, armor, bows, spears, and the network of arrows created by the demons, he began to sever the limbs of the demons with his own weapons."

"In that great assembly of war, the ground became impassable due to the heaps of fallen corpses. The battlefield was filled with the sounds of 'Haha!' and the agonizing cries of the wounded and dying soldiers."

"The arrows released by Mahasena were like venomous serpents, blazing with the brilliance of a thousand suns. By them, the heads of the demon leaders, adorned with earrings, turbans, and crowns, were severed, along with their arms decorated with armlets and bracelets. The heads, thighs, and feet of the infantry were cut down and fell to the ground."

"Mahasena, skilled in battle, used his serpent-like volleys of arrows and sharply whetted weapons—musals, mudgaras, prashas, pattishas, and spears—to strike down the enemy forces to the earth."

"The massive army of the demons, consisting of a hundred Akshauhinis, was sent to the abode of Yama in a mere moment by Mahasena, the son of Shiva."

"O Sage Angiras! At that moment, a great and terrifying river of blood began to flow on that battlefield. The hair of the demons appeared as floating moss, their severed heads as boulders on the banks, and their shields as turtles. Vultures, crows, and other birds of prey appeared like its terrifying high waves."

"In that river of blood, chariots floated like rafts; the broken axles and parts of the chariots appeared like crocodiles and sharks. The bodies of the fallen heroes moved like whales, and the arms of the riders drifted like fish. The dead horses and elephants took on the appearance of sea monsters, striking fear into the hearts of the timid."

"In that place of combat, some cried out 'O Father! O Father!', others 'O Brother!', and some 'O Supreme Lord!', calling out loudly to their friends and kinsmen. At that time, nothing but these cries of distress could be heard. It was then that the lotus-eyed Mahakali began to drink the blood of the demons, filling her skull-cup (kharpara)."

"In the midst of the battle, she playfully caught ten lakh elephants and a hundred lakh horses with one hand and tossed them into her mouth with ease."

"With a slight smile on her face, Kāli caught ten thousand chariots along with their riders and horses, pulling them in with the strength of her feet and casting them across the battlefield as she moved."

"The demonic forces were utterly mangled by the rain of arrows from Kartikeya. According to the scriptures, thousands of headless trunks (kabandhas) rose up and began to dance on the battlefield where so many had fallen."

"Among the demon forces, those who remained alive fled from the battlefield in all directions. They could not remain steady to fight. The demon generals—Vrishaparva, Viprachitti, Dambha, and Vikankana—reassured their retreating troops and, joining together, began to fight Kartikeya simultaneously."

"Even in this great battle, only the demoness Mahamari did not turn her back. However, Vrishaparva, Viprachitti, Dambha, and Vikankana were unable to ward off the volleys of arrows from Kartikeya and could not endure his strikes."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O wise one! Unable to bear the combat of Kartikeya, the demons like Vrishaparva and others lost all enthusiasm and prowess. They abandoned the battle and fled. Seeing this, the gods sounded their conches in victory and played thousands of instruments and drums. A rain of flowers fell from the sky upon the head of Kartikeya."

"Seeing the wondrous and fierce combat of Kartikeya, which was destroying the demons like the fire at the end of an age, the demon-lord Marshana realized the total destruction of his race was at hand."

"O Sage! Beholding the son of Parvati as a smokeless, blazing fire in the assembly of war, Marshana, in great rage, mounted his chariot, drew his excellent bow, and quickly covered the son of the Krittikas with a rain of arrows."

"From the tips of the arrows released from the hand of Mahasena, fire emerged, which in an instant burnt hundreds of villages, towns, and groups of men to ashes."

"Seeing his army being burnt by the fire-weapon of Kartikeya, the great demon-lord Marshana fixed the Parjanya-astra (cloud weapon) to his bow. Those arrows rose into the sky, covered the heavens like clouds, and extinguished the fire with a downpour of water. From those same clouds, a volley of arrows began to fall upon Mahasena."

"Then the son of Shiva, becoming angry, fixed the wondrous Vayavya-astra (wind weapon) to his bow. That weapon blew with the force of a great hurricane, and by its mighty power, it scattered and neutralized the cloud-weapon of the demon-lord."

"The battle between these two was extraordinary. They neutralized each other's weapons: the cloud-weapon with the wind-weapon, the wind-weapon with the fire-weapon, and the fire-weapon was countered by its own opposing force."

"The son of Shiva neutralized the Chandra-astra with a Chandra-astra, the Kuvera-astra with a Kuvera-astra, the Indra-astra with an Indra-astra, and the Nairrita-astra with a Nairrita-astra."

"He countered the Yama-astra with a Yama-astra, the Ishana-astra with an Ishana-astra, the Varuna-astra with a Varuna-astra, and the Shaiva-astra with a Shaiva-astra on all sides."

"He countered the Parvata-astra (mountain weapon) with a Pavana-astra (wind weapon), the Gandharva-astra with a Gandharva-astra, the Paishacha-astra with a Paishacha-astra, and the Uraga-astra (serpent weapon) with an Uraga-astra."

"The Rakshasa-astra was neutralized by a Rakshasa-astra, and the Danava-astra by a Danava-astra. Kartikeya, the son of Pashupati, neutralized the mighty Pashupata-astra with a Pashupata-astra of his own."

"The powerful Mahasena neutralized the Naga-astra with a Varaha-astra. In this way, Kartikeya, the joy of Parvati’s heart and the knower of all weapons, neutralized all the volleys of weapons sent by the wicked Marshana."

"Due to the dense network of arrows, it could not be discerned whether it was day, night, or twilight. Neither the earth, the sky, nor the directions could be seen. The orbits of the planets, the sun, and the moon were not visible, and the movement of the wind seemed to stop. In that tumultuous battle, the network of arrows created a thick darkness everywhere. Marshana again covered Kartikeya with a flood of arrows."

"Just as the waters of a lake are heated by the intense rays of the sun in the month of Bhadrapada, the battlefield became scorched by the heat of the arrows created by the demon-lord."

"Seeing such a terrible battle, the gods headed by Indra became extremely terrified and fled in all directions, like clouds scattered by a heavy wind."

"Then, the brilliant and battle-skilled Kartikeya, with a sharp arrow, cut Marshana's bow at the handle. Within the blink of an eye, the demon-lord took up another bow."

"With a great roar, the demon-lord twanged his bow and cut Kartikeya's bow with a tomara. With four sharp arrows, he killed the chariot horses, and with a kshurapra weapon, he severed the head of the earring-adorned charioteer, causing it to fall to the ground."

In an instant, the great demon Marshana reduced Kartikeya's beautiful chariot to ashes with his fire-arrows and utterly shattered the peacock standard atop the flagstaff using divine weapons.

Then the demon-lord hurled a Shakti spear at Kartikeya, which blazed with the brilliance of a hundred suns. Stricken by that great weapon, the life-force of the son of Shankara was oppressed, and he fell into a swoon for a moment.

Regaining consciousness after a short while, Kartikeya took up another great bow, which had been given to him previously by Lord Vishnu. Drawing it to his ear, he began to rain down arrows with great speed.

The heroic Kartikeya, filled with rage, covered the demon-lord Marshana again with a volley of sharp, stone-whetted arrows adorned with golden feathers, drawn back to his very ear.

With twelve arrows, the defiant Marshana cut the bowstring at the handle of Kartikeya’s bow. Thereupon, the great hero Kartikeya took up a magnificent Discus (Chakra) endowed with a hundred rotations and supreme luster.

Whirling that Chakra a hundred times, the son of Shambhu released it toward the demon-lord. Seeing the great Chakra approaching, the demon-lord descended from

his chariot and prostrated himself with his head to the ground. Seeing him in such a posture of surrender, the Chakra spared him and ascended into the sky.

Then the son of Pavaka, who was as brilliant as fire itself, took up a shield (charma) as bright as a hundred moons, adorned with a hundred bells, and a sharp sword. He flew into the sky with great speed.

Desiring to sever the head of Marshana, the son of Shiva advanced with sword and shield. Seeing this, Marshana used "vatsadanta" arrows, which were as deadly as venomous serpents and adorned with golden feathers, to cut the sword and shield from his hands, sending them falling to the earth.

Thereupon, the son of the Krittikas, Kartikeya, smiled slightly and, with a "tomara" weapon, effortlessly cut through Marshana's bow and shattered his chariot, horses, and charioteer into pieces.

While Marshana stood with his bow broken, his horses slain, and his charioteer gone, the son of Shambhu used twelve sharp tomara arrows adorned with vulture feathers to shred Marshana’s armor and his beautiful crown, set with rubies and gems, into tiny pieces.

Then Kartikeya, the commander and son of Shambhu, struck the chest of the demon-lord Marshana with a spear made of solid iron, which was decorated with celestial gems and smeared with fragrant sandalwood.

Struck by that irresistible Shakti, Marshana lost consciousness and leaned against the flagpole of his chariot. After a moment, he regained his senses, took up a sword and shield in great rage, and prepared for battle again.

Marshana leaped into the air, desiring to kill the son of Shiva. Seeing him flying through the sky, the son of Agni used a fierce rain of arrows to cut the sword and shield from his hands.

Even then, Marshana quickly took up another Shakti spear, which looked like the flames of the fire of dissolution and was as bright as a hundred suns.

That infallible Shakti, always worshipped by the demons with fragrances and garlands and surrounded by a garland of flames, was hurled by the demon Marshana with great fury at the chest of Kartikeya.

That Shakti fell upon the chest of the high-souled Kartikeya. His chest pierced and his consciousness failing, the son of Parvati fell to the ground in a deep swoon.

Seeing Kartikeya lying as if dead on the battlefield, the goddess Kalika took him in her arms and went to Shiva. The Great Lord Shankara, the god of gods, restored the six-faced Kartikeya to life by the power of the Great Mantra.

Providing him with infinite strength, Shiva raised the faultless Kartikeya. Having risen, the commander of the divine armies stood beside his father. Then, the goddess Kalika herself entered the battlefield to wage war.

As the intoxicated Kalika moved toward the battle, Indra and the other world-protectors, along with thousands of Devas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas, Pishachas, Nagas, and Rakshasas, followed behind her.

Siddhas, Charanas, Vidyadharas, the terrifying Bhairavas, Dakinis, Yoginis, the child-slaying Putana, and the Matrikas like Gauri and Brahmani, who are the divine powers (*shaktis*), all followed her.

Then, terrifying the three worlds with a leonine roar, Kali entered the battle. In the joy of combat, she drank wine and began to dance like one possessed.

The eight Shaktis, including Ugrachanda, drank as much wine as they desired. Millions of Yoginis, intoxicated by the drink, began to dance upon the battlefield.

Then, Roshana and Marshana both mounted their chariots and prepared for battle. But Marshana, filled with rage, said to his elder brother, King Roshana: "O King! You remain here. I alone shall conquer this small battle."

Marshana's intent was that since Roshana was a great archer and the lord of the three worlds, it was not fitting for him to fight a mere woman; he believed he could finish the fight alone.

Boasting thus before the King, Marshana donned his armor, took up his bow, mounted his great chariot, and bound his finger-guards made of iguana skin.

In that battle, the mother of the world, Kali, was filled with great rage, causing the demon armies to flee in terror.

Marshana extinguished the fire-weapon released by Kali using a great cloud-weapon (*Parjanya-astra*). Enraged by this, Kali fixed the Ishana-astra, which Marshana neutralized with a Gandharva-astra.

Then the Empress of the gods, Kali, hurled the Pashupata-astra, which shone like a hundred suns, to kill Marshana. The demon-lord neutralized it with a sharp Varuna-astra.

The daughter of the Mountain, sanctifying herself with the Narayana-astra mantra, released that weapon at the demon. Knowing the secret of that weapon, the demon-king Marshana quickly descended from his excellent chariot to the ground.

With great devotion, the King prostrated with his head bowed to the Narayana-astra released by the Devi. Seeing his surrender, the great weapon did no harm to the King and ascended into the sky.

Then the Great Goddess released both the Brahma-astra and a Shakti that blazed ten yojanas high into the sky. The demon-lord Marshana extinguished both the Brahma-astra and the irresistible Shakti with a single Brahma-astra of his own.

Kali then released a mantra-astra aimed at the demon's heart. Marshana neutralized that infallible weapon with a volley of his own arrows.

The goddess Kalika then hurled a terrifying trident (Shula), one yojana long and equally wide, blazing like the fire of world-destruction. Marshana, an expert in all weapons, cut the trident into a hundred pieces with his sword.

Then Parvati, the daughter of the Mountain King, released the Mountain-weapon (Parvata-astra) at the demon. Released from the Devi’s hand, that weapon began to rain mountains incessantly upon the head of the demon-king.

Seeing his army oppressed by the rain of mountains, the great demon Marshana neutralized it with the vayavya-astra.

After the Mountain-weapon was countered, the daughter of the Snowy Mountains took up a Shakti spear that shone like molten gold and was decorated with golden ornaments. Within the head of that Shakti resided Agni and the world-protectors, and within its blade resided the eternal Vishnu.

Brahma said to Angiras: "O Son! I (Brahma) resided in its middle, and the twelve Suns resided on its back. Kali took up that all-consuming Shakti, intending to hurl it at the demon."

At the moment she was to release it, a celestial voice echoed through the sky, saying: "O beautiful one! O consort of Shambhu! O Kali! It is not fitting for you to release this Shakti into the heart of this demon."

Hearing this voice from the sky, the lotus-eyed Kali, beloved of Shiva, refrained from releasing the Shakti and instead slew millions of the demon’s soldiers.

Then, the enemy-crushing Kali, assuming a terrifying and fierce form, opened her mouth wide and rushed forward to swallow the demon Marshana. Seeing this, the great hero Marshana filled her expansive mouth with a dense network of various types of arrows.

Filled with rage, Kali took up a great conch born of the sea and hurled it at the demon-king. Seeing the conch approaching, Marshana, in a great fury, used divine weapons to shatter it into a hundred pieces.

When the Great Goddess rushed forward again with speed, intent on swallowing him, that noble demon, the best of the Vaishnavas and a master of all yogic perfections, began to expand his own body to a vast size. Thus, the illustrious Marshana assumed a form too immense for Kali to seize.

Becoming twice as enraged, the terrifying Mahakali seized the demon with both arms and, with a powerful kick, shattered his high chariot along with the horses and the charioteer into dust.

She then swiftly sent the demon's flank-protecting soldiers to the abode of the King of Death. She hurled a great trident (*shula*), blazing like the flames of the fire of dissolution, at the demon.

When the demon-king, endowed with fierce prowess, struck down that trident and neutralized it, Kali, her body overcome with great anger, seized him by the hair with her fist as easily as if holding a garland.

Holding him by the hair, she whirled the demon around in the sky until he lost consciousness. The Goddess then swiftly hurled the unconscious demon onto a mountain peak. Though he did not die, he fell from one mountain to another; just as a mountain peak is crushed by a thunderbolt, the mountains were shattered by the touch of his diamond-like body.

The demon-king fell to the earth, unconscious, covered in dust and devoid of sense. After resting for a moment, the leader of the Daityas quickly regained consciousness and returned for battle.

Impelled by rage and momentarily deluded by the impact, Marshana rushed swiftly through the sky. Seeing this, the Great Goddess also moved with speed and engaged him in hand-to-hand combat (wrestling) in the air.

Mahakali wrestled with Marshana for a full day and night. However, that noble Vaishnava demon-king did not release any weapons against the Goddess; viewing her as the Mother, he bowed his head and prostrated to her repeatedly.

Seizing the demon, the Goddess whirled him around again and again and threw him high into the sky, but the demon-king did not die and fell back to the earth.

The powerful demon-king quickly rose from the ground, prostrated to Mahakali, and once more mounted his great chariot.

When the demon would not die despite all her efforts, the Goddess became deeply concerned. Ceasing the battle for a moment, she went to Maheshvara and related the entire account of the war.

Hearing the account from the mouth of Bhagavati Kalika, the Lord of Lords, Mahadeva Sadashiva, also became deeply thoughtful. He then meditated upon

Devi Radhika with devotion and prayed, "O Mother! O consort of Hrishikesha! O Radha! We have fallen into a great ocean of danger; protect us."

Then, the Great Illusion (*Mahamaya*) Radha, who is the embodiment of consciousness and the supreme being, appeared in the sky. She saw Mahadeva deeply worried about the destruction of the demon Marshana, as those two demons had assumed forms that were unopposed and terrifying.

As those two best of Vaishnavas were invincible even to other gods, the Great Goddess summoned her own soul-form, Sudarshana, for their destruction. That weapon was as brilliant as a hundred moons, powerful with a hundred rotations, possessed a thousand edges, and was adorned with a hundred eyes.

That supreme weapon, the Chakra, travels according to will, destroys the desires of enemies, fulfills the wishes of the righteous, and is endowed with supreme brilliance. It is the destroyer of all Daityas and Danavas and is eternally worshipped by all the gods.

The Goddess then meditated upon that most beloved weapon, created by the wielder of the disc, Narayana, which blazed with the light of ten million suns and possessed a terrifying form.

Knowing her thought, the Sudarshana Chakra appeared before her in person with palms joined. Bowing its neck in humility, it asked the Devi, "Mother! Why have you summoned me? What must be done? Please command me." Hearing these words, the Great Goddess affectionately said, "Child! Save the gods, including Birinchi (Brahma), who are being greatly oppressed by the two demons, Roshana and Marshana."

"O destroyer of the enemies of the gods! Without you, there is no other protector for the deities. You are the destroyer of all difficulties, the remover of all pain, and the annihilator of all distress. You are capable of burning the three worlds with your own splendor; there is no doubt in this."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O Sage! Upon hearing these words from the lotus-mouth of the supreme power, Narayani, the king of weapons, Sudarshana, expanded his form just as the Samvartaka fire increases at the time of dissolution."

By the speed of the Chakra, the earth trembled, the oceans were agitated, and the entire world, including gods and humans, was filled with the sound of "Haha!" Everyone was terrified, fearing an untimely end of the world.

Filling the earth, the sky, and the ten directions with its own splendor, the demon-slaying Sudarshana Chakra reached the demon-king with great speed.

Reaching the presence of the two demon-kings, the great weapon destroyed the chariots, banners, charioteers, and flank-guards in an instant. After burning Roshana and Marshana, the destroyer of the enemies of the gods returned to the side of the Great Goddess Radha.

Then the gods, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Bhairavas, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, Pishachas, Nagas, and Kinnaras all became joyful in mind.

They sang, danced in great celebration, and played thousands of instruments. The sages praised the Great Goddess with joyful hearts, and a rain of flowers fell upon her from the sky.

Thus ends the thirteenth chapter, titled "The Slaying of Roshana and Marshana," in the Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Fourteen: The Slaying of the Demon Dhundhumara

Brahma said to Angiras: "Child! After the bodies of Roshana and Marshana were burnt by the fire of the Chakra, two four-armed men carrying the conch, disc, mace, and lotus emerged from those two burnt bodies."

Wearing celestial garlands and clothes, adorned with pearl necklaces and polished gem-earrings, they illuminated the earth, the sky, and the ten directions with the radiance of their bodies.

Fanned by white whisks (*chamaras*) held by the lotus-hands of celestial maidens, they were the best among the attendants of Krishna—the foremost of Vaishnavas, served by the devotees of the Lord.

Descending from their celestial chariot in the sky to the ground, the two brothers, bound by supreme devotion, prostrated with their heads to the earth at the lotus feet of the Great Goddess Radha, which are worshipped by Narayana himself with offerings of flowers.

Seeing the supreme Goddess, the embodiment of consciousness and the enchantress of the world, they fell at her feet with their necks bowed in devotion and began to offer prayers.

Marshana said: "O Mother! Out of thirst for the nectar of liberation flowing from your two lotus feet, our bowed heads rest there like bees, for you are the personification of absolute liberation (*Kaivalya*)."

"O Mother! O Janani! Having been scorched by the fire of your terrible curse, we have finally been freed from the fire of sin by your grace. O Merciful One! We were formerly punished by you, and now we are liberated by you."

Then, with great devotion, the two brothers addressed the Great Goddess: "O Devi! We now desire to return to our own abode. Please be pleased and grant us permission."

Saying this and following the command of Radha, the two of them circumambulated her, bowed to the Goddess's lotus feet with devotion, mounted their excellent chariot, and departed for their own home.

Angiras said: "We do not know the cause of their curse. Please cut through the bonds of our doubt with the sword of your words and liberate us."

Brahma said to Angiras: "Son! Once, in a secluded spot on the peak of Mount Gandhamadana, Krishna was enjoying the company of Ganga."

While sporting with Ganga, seventeen years passed. The beautiful Radha, unable to see Krishna for so long, became distressed. Unable to bear the agony of separation, she searched for him everywhere; even after entering the dwellings of the gods and searching with great effort, she could not find him.

She thought, "He has abandoned me because of my beauty," and became deeply anxious. Then, through her divine power, she discovered the secret: that he was

sporting with the river-goddess Ganga in a cave of Mount Gandhamadana. Filled with rage, Radha immediately went to him.

Arriving at the mountain slope, the Great Goddess saw two men standing as guards at the entrance of the cave, holding canes. They were dressed like Krishna, adorned with forest garlands, and wore yellow clothes.

Seeing those two cane-holding gatekeepers, Radha, burning with anger, asked them, "O you two! Tell me the truth. Is Krishna inside this secluded and beautiful cave? Tell me truly."

Terrified by Radha's words, they lied and said, "Mother! Krishna is not here." Hearing this lie, Radha became even more enraged. In that fury, she entered the cave and saw Krishna engaged in sport with Ganga.

Seeing Radha filled with rage, Krishna became very afraid and immediately disappeared. And Ganga, the best of rivers, fearing Radha, split the mountain cave and fled with great speed.

In her anger, Radha cursed the two gatekeepers: "Because of your false speech, you shall be born as terrible demons on earth, to be shunned by both gods and demons."

After Krishna disappeared and Ganga fled in the form of a river, the greatly enraged Radhika arrived at the cave entrance and cursed the two cane-holding gatekeepers: "O you wicked men! Because you repeatedly uttered the lie that Krishna is not here, by my curse, you shall descend to the earth and be born into the race of demons (Danavas). However, you shall conquer all the worlds and become the sovereigns of kings. In the form of terrifying demons, you shall be invincible to both gods and demons; this shall not be otherwise."

They shall be invincible to the Yakshas, Kimpurushas, Siddhas, Rishis, Daityas, Pannagas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Suparnas, Vetals, Kushmandas, Brahma-rakshasas, and other Pishachas.

"Endowed with great strength, you shall be devoted to Narayana. You shall be heroes skilled in all weapons, arrogant, and uncontrollable in war, and shall be invincible to all living beings. Later, being liberated by me—that is, being scorched

by the power of the weapons released from my hand—you shall attain my lotus feet within a short time."

Having thus cursed the two gatekeepers, who were dearer than the dearest, Radhika's heart became overwhelmed with great delusion, and tears began to fall from her eyes. Wiping them away, she spoke words full of affection.

Radha said: "O children! Instead of punishing the one who deserved punishment, I have punished those who did not deserve such a sentence; yet the offense of that wicked person was not mitigated in the least. That is, that person could not realize the consequence of my displeasure at all."

"O children! You are the foremost gatekeepers of my supreme abode. Do not grieve any further because you have been cursed by me."

O Sage! After Radha, whose eyes were filled with tears, spoke these affectionate words, those two gatekeepers prostrated themselves with great devotion at her worshipable lotus feet, which resemble blooming lotuses.

Description of the Kingdom of Roshana and Marshana

Following the command of the Devi, the two foremost attendants of the Lord took deep and warm breaths and descended from Goloka to the earth to be born into the race of demons. They became possessed of great might, foremost among the knowers of all weapons, and highly proficient in the science of war.

Those two demons, Roshana and Marshana, being victorious everywhere in battle, seized the positions of Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairrita, Varuna, and Pavana.

The two noble and fiercely powerful demon-lords, by the strength of their own might, defeated the King of Yakshas (Kubera), Ishana, and me (Brahma). They also conquered Kandarpa, Vishvakarma, the Vasus, and the nine planets, occupying their respective authorities. They stripped the gods of their power and appointed a demon to oversee each of their duties.

Defeated by those two, the gods fell into a wretched state and sought refuge in Shiva. To accomplish the work of the gods, Mahadeva fought a fierce and terrible battle against them.

Then, those two demons, uncontrollable in war, quickly bound Mahadeva with the serpent-noose weapon (*Naga-pasha*). The demon-kings, the greatest among the powerful, won the victory and took Shiva with them to their own city.

To secure his own release, the defeated Mahadeva gave those two foremost demons his own irresistible and infallible Pashupata weapon. Thereafter, those two took over the position of Indra and sat upon his throne as kings.

Having conquered Indra, the two took the jewel among horses, Uchchaishravas; the jewel among elephants, Airavata; the best of trees, Parijata; and the most excellent forest, Santanaka.

The two swift demons also took the immensely beautiful Nandan garden, the jewel among cities, Amaravati, the jewel among women, Indrani (*Shachi*), and the jewel among weapons, Ashani (the thunderbolt). Although it is mentioned they took Indrani, the significance is that they kept her in another city without violating her chastity.

They seized the infallible power of Agni named Utkrantida, whose strike never fails. From Yamaraja, they took his mount, the buffalo, and his staff (*Yama-danda*), and from Nairrita, they took the wealth of knowledge of the righteous, which is to say, they stole the science of astrology from there.

The two noble and powerful demons forcibly took the matchless royal umbrella of Varuna, made of gold and other gems, as well as his infallible noose (pasha). In this manner, they seized all the supreme weapons, vehicles, and total majesty of the gods and sat as emperors themselves.

Brahma said to the Seven Rishis: "O Brahmanas! Listen. In this way, for countless hundreds of thousands of years, these two demons remained established in the position of Indra and enjoyed supreme majesty."

"O twice-born ones! No sacrifices are to be performed, no oblations offered, and no gifts given anywhere!" Thus did the powerful demon-lord proclaim everywhere.

To show their malice toward the gods, the two demon-lords were possessed by evil intellect. Passing several years in great power, the demon-king issued this

proclamation to the assembly of Brahmanas: "O twice-born ones! Be careful. No one shall perform sacrifices, nor offer clarified butter into the fire for the gods, nor give any charity on the occasion of worship. If you do, you shall receive appropriate royal punishment."

The significance was that by stopping the offerings of clarified butter, the gods would not be able to remain strong. By such a proclamation, they abolished all auspicious deeds involving the chanting of Svaha, Svadha, Vashat, Vaushat, and Pranava, and ruled the earth without any obstacles.

The Account of the Slaying of Dhundhumara

Angiras said: After hearing the account of the origin of Roshana and Marshana within the sacred story of the most worshipable Radha, the great sage Angiras questioned his grandfather (Brahma) again.

"O Brahman! Our hearts are not sated by drinking the nectar of the qualities of Bhagavati Radhika, who has assumed a human form for her pastimes, as it flows from the lotus of your mouth. Our desire to hear of her pastimes has not ceased; we wish to hear more in detail."

"O Father! Our hearts are again bound by the desire to hear her other most wonderful deeds, for by hearing the glorification of Radha’s qualities, our minds and bodies are constantly submerged in the waters of bliss."

Brahma said: "O child Angiras! One day, the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radhika, surrounded by her companions, was going to the banks of the Yamuna to bathe, where the cool breezes scented with flower-nectar blow."

"O Sage! At that time, a night-stalker named Dhundhumara, who could travel at will and assume any form, and who then held the body of a donkey, saw Radha walking with her companions."

"Creating a demonic illusion and letting out a great roar, he made all the forest regions on the bank of the Yamuna echo. He began to roar repeatedly with a terrifying sound, like a thundercloud filled with water."

"Hearing the terrifying noise of that night-stalker, the dwellers of water, land, and forest—humans, donkeys, camels, mice, elephants, cows, goats, sheep, and birds—were all struck with terror."

"All creatures, including cats and buffaloes, fled in all directions out of great fear. By his terrible roaring, that forest was immediately set trembling."

"O Sage! With every step of that great Rakshasa Dhundhumara, whose limbs were like mountain peaks, thousands of trees were shattered and fell to the ground."

"By the force of his movement, the waters of the Yamuna, the sister of Yama, were agitated. That splashing water rose into the sky and was blown about like rain by the wind. Seeing this great wonder, all the companions of Radha were terrified."

"They saw that great being, most terrifying and fierce, with a head that reached the sky, adorned with matted hair like garlands. Radha and all her companions then beheld that giant-bodied Rakshasa."

"That most cruel, man-eating Rakshasa in the form of a donkey possessed great valor and prowess. His body was thirty-six yojanas in width and a hundred yojanas in length."

"He stood occupying the Yamuna garden, his form coarse and terrifying, as black as a dense cloud in the rainy season, with fierce, yellow eyes that inspired great fear."

"He had a terrifying face with eight protruding tusks. In his greed to eat human flesh, he dug into the earth with his hooves. He had long flanks, a hanging belly, a copper-colored beard and mustache, and red, curly hair."

"Standing in Sri Radhika’s path, he constantly yawned with his huge mouth, gaping in his lust for flesh. Seeing that Rakshasa before them—the very embodiment of death—Radha’s companions were extremely distressed with fear."

"The girls began to wail like helpless creatures in distress. Crying out in fearful tones, they wept in great sorrow. Surrounded by the night-stalker of terrifying form, they all shrank in fear for their lives and were completely bewildered."

The Devi said: Seeing her companions bewildered and trapped by the Rakshasa, the Great Goddess Radhika spoke to that cruel night-stalker.

"O you sinful, man-eating Rakshasa! Swallowing my companions will bring you no welfare. Just as fish in the deep waters of a lake die after swallowing a lump of poison, your life will never be saved if you swallow us."

"O cruel-minded one! Release me. You are ignorant of my true nature and have not been able to recognize me. If you have any desire to live, then be compelled to release me along with my companions immediately."

"O lowest of Rakshasas! I tell you in every way, if you desire your own welfare, then leave me. You are the destroyer of the sacrifices and worship of the gods; I shall certainly destroy you today."

"O sinful night-stalker! I am the Empress of all the gods and the punisher of arrogant men like you. Therefore, having been entreated by the lotus-born Brahma to remove the burden of the earth, I have taken birth in the house of King Vrishabhanu."

"O fool! Creation, preservation, and destruction happen through me; wise men know this for certain. People are born at the time of creation, exist in me until their time is reached, and upon being destroyed at the time of dissolution, they enter into me. Therefore, know me as the Supreme Goddess, the embodiment of undivided Time."

Brahma said: "O Angiras! Hearing these words of Radha, the Supreme Goddess and the embodiment of Time—words marked by harsh syllables—the dull-witted Rakshasa paid no heed to her meaning. Considering them merely as insults, he became like a blazing fire in his great rage."

"With his eyes red and copper-colored, blazing with extreme rage, he then said to Radhika: 'O sinful woman! Even while standing in the grip of Death, do you still speak such words? That is, is there any way left for your life to be saved?'"

"O weak one! O base woman! O daughter of Vrishabhanu! Stay still for a moment, and I shall show you the abode of the son of the Sun (Yama). Afterward, you may do to me whatever you can; for now, you have appeared as my food.'"

"Having spoken these words, the night-stalker opened his mouth many yojanas wide and rushed forward swiftly to swallow Radha along with her companions, just as the planet Rahu rushes to swallow the full moon."

"Seeing him approaching with his mouth open three yojanas wide, the immeasurable Soul, the Great Goddess Radhika, then thought to herself: 'What is our duty now? How shall my companions be saved?'"

"Thereafter, the Devi, the protectress of the virtuous who have fallen into difficulty because of Rakshasas, decided upon the slaughter of that wicked enemy. That is, she desired to destroy him peacefully without displaying the full might of her arms."

“While the Great Goddess Sri Radha stood with her companions, her body reflecting her deep thoughts, the Rakshasa, driven by intense hunger, rushed forward and swiftly swallowed her. Upon being swallowed, the Mother of the World, along with all her companions, passed from his mouth into his stomach.

Once inside the Rakshasa's belly, the Goddess, who is as swift and radiant as a flash of lightning, began to expand her form. The auspicious Mother gradually increased her body until she occupied a space ten yojanas wide.

Sri Radha then used a sword to slice through the skin of the Rakshasa's stomach. Deprived of his life-force, the cruel night-stalker immediately fell to the earth. Sri Radha then affectionately comforted her companions and led them all out through the opening in the stomach.

As soon as she emerged from the stomach, Sri Radha effortlessly resumed her form as a five-year-old girl. Witnessing this wonderful and vast deed, the gods, led by Indra, were struck with extreme wonder.

The gods began to rain flowers from heaven and dance in joy. Some played drums, some sang songs of victory in sweet voices, and others, with their necks bowed in

devotion, began to offer hymns of praise, recounting the many qualities of the Goddess.”

Thus ends the fourteenth chapter, titled "The Slaying of Dhundhumara," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Fifteen: The Search for a Groom for Sri Radha’s Marriage

Angiras said: "O Grandfather! Even after drinking the nectar-wine of the Goddess’s qualities flowing from your blooming lotus-face, our minds find no satiation. O Lord! We are your surrendered sons and disciples; please sanctify us by describing the deeds of Sri Radha’s marriage, which swiftly cut the knots of the heart."

Brahma said: "O Son Angiras! King Vrishabhanu beheld his daughter Radha, who possessed broad thighs and hips, large eyes, and immense radiance. She was endowed with the qualities of grace, beauty, and budding youth, her charm increasing day by day."

"Seeing his daughter, whose high bosom was a mark of her maturity and who was touched by the arrows of the god of love, the King sent heralds and messengers to various places where noble princes resided among the royal dynasties of the earth."

"Desiring a suitable groom, the heralds and bards commissioned by King Vrishabhanu traveled in all directions. They searched through Dasharna, Anarta, Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Vidarbha, Kashi, Ayodhya, Surashtra, Avanti, Hastinapura, Kurujangala, Kurukshetra, Panchala, Mathura, and various hermitages and small villages."

"The messengers, supported by the travel funds provided by the King, searched tirelessly through every kingdom. However, in no kingdom, city, or village did they find an excellent groom equal to the incomparable Sri Radha."

"Among all those messengers who returned from various lands, there was one named Shanaka. He was a skilled envoy—noble, wise, sweet-spoken, and an

expert in policy and discernment. He stood before King Vrishabhanu and spoke in the royal assembly."

"He addressed the noble Vrishabhanu, the best among men: 'O King! If a suitable Kshatriya cannot be found, do not be distressed. You are a leader among the Vaishya community; therefore, choose an excellent groom from the Vaishya caste and bestow your daughter upon him.'"

Shanaka said: "O King! I am one who lives by serving you; listen to my words which bring welfare and happiness. O Lord of men! Do that which is beneficial for you and which will lead to the ultimate good."

"In the land of Koshala, there lives a lord of cowherds named Malyaka, the husband of Jatila. He belongs to a prominent cowherd lineage and is distinguished by his strength, wealth, and virtuous deeds. In character and policy, the lord of cowherds, Malyaka, is highly praised."

"Malyaka has four sons: Madana, Durmada, Dama, and the youngest, Ayana. These four sons are exceedingly handsome, and among them, Ayana is renowned as the most beautiful."

"O King! Malyaka also has three daughters born of Jatila, who are the sisters of the four brothers mentioned: Yashoda, Kutila, and Prabhakari."

"Madana, the eldest son of Malyaka, married Alambusha, the daughter of the cowherd Mitra-daksha, who is beautiful in every limb."

"Madana’s younger brother, Durmada, took the hand of Sudevi, the lotus-eyed younger daughter of the wealthy cowherd-lord Bahusena."

"O best of Kings! The third brother, the powerful Dama, relying on his own valor, carried off and married the lotus-eyed maiden named Gandhavati, the daughter of the cowherd-lord of the Yamuna region, and he enjoys her company constantly."

"O Lord of the earth! Malyaka gave his first daughter, Yashoda, to Nanda, the lord of Vraja. He gave the second daughter, Kutila, to a cowherd named Pradyumna, and the third daughter, the lotus-eyed Prabhakari, was given to the cowherd Hema."

"Malyaka possesses countless wealth in the form of cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, and donkeys. He has vast stores of grain and many palatial houses and precious garments."

"The home of Malyaka is filled with gems, rubies, diamonds, exquisite clothes, and fine furniture. He is constantly surrounded by hundreds of male and female servants."

"His house is filled with all four types of food—those to be bitten, swallowed, licked, and drunk. Though he is not a king, his home is adorned with wealth like a royal palace; he is an immensely wealthy man, and few among the cowherds are as rich as he."

"Ayana is the youngest of Malyaka's sons and is yet to be married. He is illustrious, possesses the majestic gait of a lion, and the strength of a maddened elephant. He is exceedingly brilliant."

"Ayana is incomparable in beauty, grace, and the sweetness of his speech and movement. He is famous everywhere for the strength of his arms, his prowess, his enthusiasm, and his numerous virtues."

"O King of kings! Except for Ayana, the son of Malyaka, we found no groom in any city, kingdom, village, or cowherd settlement who is a fit match for your daughter."

"O mighty-armed one! We traveled to every place where we heard of a potential groom, but we could find no one in any land suitable for your daughter. Now, do whatever you deem right."

Brahma said: "O Son! Hearing these words from the skilled messenger, the King, desiring to bring an excellent groom for his daughter, commanded the companions of the Queen in the inner chambers."

"Then, with a heart as clear as the moon, the King said to the chief minister, Shanaka: 'O Minister! If you seek my welfare, then go swiftly with these companions to bring the groom. O noble one! By my word, this task cannot be accomplished by anyone but you.'"

Brahma said to Angiras: “Mounting a chariot drawn by divine horses like Sugriva and accompanied by a fourfold army, the noble minister set out for the home of the cowherd Malyaka in the territory of the King of Koshala, to invite them for the marriage of the beautiful Sri Radha."

"Hearing these words of her father, Vrishabhanu—words that were harsh, unfavorable, and a source of increasing grief—Radhika became overwhelmed with deep anxiety. Her heart was filled with sorrow, and she began to sigh heavily and frequently."

“Neither by night nor by day did she find sleep, withdrawing her senses from the world. She remained in a state of constant vigil, neglecting to cleanse her limbs. Singing songs, engaging in crafts, or conversing—nothing brought satisfaction to her mind. Her heart remained perpetually bewildered and anxious. Sri Radha, considering her father’s decision to marry her to Ayana as an inauspicious omen, was consumed by great worry. She could not sleep; her senses shrank in contemplation. Whether standing, sitting, or applying fragrant pastes, or even laughing with her companions, she found no joy. She remained constantly exhausted and distressed.

Sri Radha thought to herself, "Alas! What is my recourse now? Previously, I was cursed by the High-Souled Sri Krishna to live as a mortal; has the time for my marriage now arrived? By what means will that Adhokshaja, the imperishable Supreme Person Sri Krishna, appear so that I may attain Him quickly?"

Consumed by this thought, Sri Radha called together hundreds of her companions. Under the pretext of performing the Katyayani Vrata (vow), she went to the banks of the Yamuna, desiring to worship the infallible Sri Krishna.

That river Yamuna, the sister of Yama, was beautiful with spreading waves. The forest was enchanting, shaded by dense branches, where bees hummed sweetly, intoxicated by the nectar of the flowers. Sri Radha, established in strict discipline in that fragrant place covered by hundreds of flowering vines, began her worship to attain Sri Krishna, the Lord of the Universe.

To attain Sri Krishna as her husband, she undertook a rigorous vow. Sometimes she ate once during the day, sometimes once at night, and at other times she fasted

completely or lived only on fruits. Occasionally, she spent the day consuming only the froth of milk.

For many days, she lived only on water or the juice of leaves. Conquering her internal and external senses and practicing pranayama (breath control), she remained immersed in the self. Although Sri Radha, the foremost of ascetics, performed these hardships as easily as a child plays with a ball, her supreme luster increased daily through the power of her penance.

Like the digit of the moon in the bright fortnight, Sri Radha, the ocean of grace, became increasingly beautiful in her generosity, her splendor, her sweet speech, and her graceful gait. Skilled in the depths of sweet love and bringing joy to the hearts of all, her lotus-like face bloomed perpetually at the mention of Sri Krishna's name.

Though distressed by the fierce heat of her penance, which would be impossible for gods or humans, Sri Radha’s splendor did not diminish. Just as lotuses in a lake do not lose their grace even when scorched by the fierce rays of the summer sun, she remained radiant.

Seeing her performing such rigorous penance like a sage, Sri Madhava, the slayer of enemies, appeared before her, possessing the hue of a fresh rain cloud.

He was adorned with a beautiful crown of Gunja berries, His chest marked by the Srivatsa, and His face, resembling a blooming red lotus, blazed with the brilliance of Brahman.

The lover of sweet flute music sat in the lotus posture, His head adorned with a crown of peacock feathers and His chest graced by the footprint of Bhrigu. He wore a garland of forest flowers (Vanamala) around which swarms of bees buzzed, drawn by the nectar.

His soles were marked with the signs of the flag, thunderbolt, goad, and a cow’s footprint. His arms were well-rounded and strong. His long arms reached His knees, and His navel was deep like a well. He was served by Garuda, Prahlada the King of Daityas, and sages like Sukadeva and Narada.

Upon seeing that enchanting form, the lotus of everyone's heart blooms, just as the sun’s rays cause the lilies to open. Smiling, Sri Hari spoke to Sri Radha in a voice filled with deep and sweet love.

"O Empress of the Gods! Cease your penance now. Do not further distress me or the three worlds with this fierce heat. I am bound to you like a purchased slave. Now, ask of me the boon you desire."”

Brahma said: "Hearing the words of the Lord, Sri Radha opened her eyes and saw Sri Krishna before her. Quickly rising, she prostrated and worshipped Him with mental offerings, purifying herself. Then, with joined palms, she spoke to the Lord."

The Devi said: "O Bhagavan! O Slayer of the enemies of gods! Do not cast me into a state that is contrary to Dharma; I bow to you. You are the remover of all fear, and I am your servant. I am greatly afraid; O Lord, save me from this fear. O Lord with the face of a god! Bowing my head, I prostrate at your lotus feet and speak. My father has resolved to give me to Ayana, the son of the cowherd Malyaka of Koshala. For this reason, I am terrified."

"O Giver of Honor! O Slayer of Madhu! I am devoted only to You; how can any other base mortal marry me? Thinking of this, I am greatly ashamed. Therefore, O Lord, graciously marry me yourself, or else I shall not be able to keep this life."

"O Lion among men! Even knowing me as one who has sought refuge, how can You ignore me? How can a dog approach to eat the flesh from a lion's back? O Supreme Lord! Forgive my offense. If You abandon me, I shall tie a great stone around my neck and give up my life in the deep ocean."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O Child! Hearing these humble words and seeing the tears of grief falling from the eyes of Sri Radha, Sri Krishna, the slayer of Madhu, quickly took her onto His lap. With affection, Govinda wiped her eyes with the corner of His yellow garment and began to kiss her lotus face. With sweet and gentle words, He comforted her greatly."

The Lord said: "Do not fear, O beautiful one! Listen to my words which are for your benefit. There are many ways to remove your fear, O auspicious one with eyes like lotus petals. Listen to what I say for your welfare."

"That Ayana is also born of my own portion (Amsha); therefore, O fair one, what is there for you to fear?"

Sri Radha said: "O Lord! Let him be born of your portion or whatever he may be, I shall never once consider him my beloved in my heart. If he takes my hand, I shall tie a rope around my neck and give up my life right before You; I tell You this truly, there is no doubt."

The Lord said: "O beautiful one! I do not speak falsely to you. This matter was ordained long ago; why do you speak thus now? For a woman to have two husbands is a great sin; it destroys Dharma, merit, and fame—there is no other way."

The Devi said: "O Lord! Even if my life departs, I shall never engage in union with him. I tell you this for certain; I have no need for a body that has reached such a wretched state."

The Lord said: "I shall tell you a way to destroy the agony of your mind. To see the marriage festival of my maternal uncle Ayana, I shall go to his house with my mother Yashoda. Then, I shall move from my mother's lap to my uncle's lap. Being on my uncle Ayana's lap, I shall come to your father Vrishabhanu's house at the time of the wedding. Then, through trickery, I shall cause Ayana to lose his manhood and turn him into a eunuch."

The significance of this is that when Sri Krishna is seated on Ayana's lap at the time of the wedding, Ayana will be positioned behind Sri Krishna. Thus, when the wedding rituals and offerings are performed, it will be Sri Krishna who essentially receives them. In this manner, Sri Radha's marriage will be secretly and truly accomplished with Sri Krishna himself.

The Lord said: "O beloved! I have devised this plan in accordance with Dharma and shared it with you. O beautiful one! To the world, it will appear as though Sri

Radha has married Ayana, but the supreme and most confidential truth of this secret union shall remain known only to us."

"O faultless one! O Sri Radha of perfect beauty! I shall come with him and fulfill the desire of your heart. O Devi! Let the world, ignorant of this great mystery, recognize you as the wife of Ayana."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O son! After Bhagavan Sri Krishna spoke these words which were both beneficial and dear to Sri Radha, He spoke again in a sweet and charming voice to delight His beloved."

The Lord said: "O dearest Sri Radha! I am exceedingly pleased with you. Therefore, I grant you another boon. From this day forward, devotees shall always place your name before mine when they remember me. Placing the word 'Radha' first and the word 'Krishna' afterward, any person who daily remembers this name shall surely attain liberation."

"O fair-faced one! For that person who chants the dual name of 'Radha-Krishna' during the three periods of the day (dawn, noon, and dusk), all sins—including the killing of a cow, a Brahmana, a woman, or a child, and the betrayal of trust—are utterly destroyed."

"Whether one is ungrateful, a consumer of wine, a seller of Soma, an associator with the forbidden, or even a thief of gold—by chanting the name 'Radha-Krishna,' they shall be liberated from all sins and attain supreme salvation; of this, there is no doubt."

"O daughter of the cowherds! When this name 'Radha-Krishna' is well-remembered, millions of great sins and minor offenses are reduced to ashes. Upon leaving this mortal coil, such a person reaches My realm and, attaining the state of Sayujya (union), dwells there in eternal bliss like a god."

"If, however, out of delusion or in jest, someone utters My name first and then attaches your name, 'Radha,' afterward, they shall incur the sin equivalent to that of destroying an embryo."

"If one says 'Krishna-Radha' out of ignorance or delusion, the merit of ten million lifetimes is destroyed in an instant. Not only is merit lost, but by reversing the order—failing to say 'Radha' first—one incurs the sin of killing a Brahmana; of this, there is no doubt."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O child! Having thus comforted His beloved Sri Radha with these sweet and beneficial words, Janardana Sri Krishna—while wiping her limbs with the corner of His golden cloth—vanished in an instant."

Thus ends the fifteenth chapter, titled "The Search for a Groom for Sri Radha's Marriage" in the dialogue between Brahma and the Seven Sages, from the Radha-Hridayam of the Uttara-Khanda of the Brahmanda Purana, within the Paramahamsa Samhita composed by Vyasa.

Chapter Sixteen: The Preparations for the Marriage of Sri Radha

Brahma said: "Having received the boon from Sri Krishna, Sri Radha returned to her father's house with a joyful heart. Then, King Vrishabhanu brought together his ministers, citizens, priests, and Brahmanas to initiate the great festival of Sri Radha's wedding."

"The King proclaimed the marriage throughout the settlements. He invited his relatives, kinsmen, noble friends, and fellow kings, along with their servants and families, to grace the festival."

"He summoned musicians, celestial dancers, artisans, wealthy merchants, actors, and bards who recite the genealogies of kings, ensuring everyone was honored and welcomed."

"He sent swift messengers with invitation letters to the four orders—Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras—as well as to sages, monks, and the entire cowherd community."

"Then the King began to decorate the city. The streets, both inside and out, were sprinkled with water scented with delightful fragrances. The main gates and archways were adorned with rubies, diamonds, and garlands of exquisite flowers."

"Fragrant puffed rice and flowers were scattered at the palace gates and on every road. At every doorway, jars filled with water and marked with vermilion were placed, decorated with mango leaves and illuminated by thousands of lamps."

"The palace towers were decorated with flags of white, red, blue, and yellow. Throughout the temples, strings of brilliant gems were hung, making the interiors glow as if by their own light."

"The main residences were adorned with strings of pearls and fine gems. They were decorated with curd, unhusked rice, and sandalwood paste, and made to shine with rows of beautiful lamps."

"Under the King's command, learned Brahmanas performed auspicious rituals in the temples, chanting Vedic mantras and worshipping the deities with various offerings."

"Every house in King Vrishabhanu's city echoed with the holy sound of the Vedas, which was like nectar to the ears. During the marriage of Sri Radha, the royal palace assumed an incomparable and supreme beauty."

"The chariots, elephants, horses, and weapons were all worshipped and decorated with gems, diamonds, fragrant flowers, and beautiful garlands."

"O Sage! The generals stood ready, dressed in fine attire and ornaments, their fingers bound in guards of iguana skin, skilled in the use of various weapons. Thousands of chariot-warriors, cavalry, and infantrymen stood in the outer courts, resplendent in their royal uniforms."

"In the middle court, hundreds of musicians and singers gathered. They wore gem-studded earrings, divine garments, and various ornaments, their bodies anointed with sweet-smelling perfumes."

"Dancers, actors, and bards dressed in splendid costumes began their performances. They sang songs of praise and told stories of the King's glory with great joy."

"Hundreds of young women, their faces lit by the glow of their earrings and dressed in colorful garments, anointed themselves with divine scents. They were

adorned with necklaces, armlets, and anklets, their long dark hair rivaling the blackness of bees. Desiring to see the wedding festival, these noble women of the cowherd community stood in rows along the royal roads."

"In every town and city, the men and women of the cowherd community stood at their doors, dressed in jewelry made of rubies and gold."

“Each doorway and gate was adorned with auspicious marks—sandalwood paste, unhusked rice, and fragrant flowers. They were decorated with yellow mustard seeds, parched rice, and hundreds of strings of glowing red coral and fresh young sprouts.

Beside every entrance, the King placed pairs of sturdy, flawless jars (Kalashas). These vessels, shaped like conches and filled with crystal-clear, cool water, were garlanded with jasmine and shells, standing as symbols of prosperity and welcome.

King Vrishabhanu looked upon his city and saw millions of white-washed mansions, shining like the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. These homes were draped in golden garlands, their courtyards beautifully leveled and cleansed, and the ground was joyfully sprinkled with scented water.

Inside the palaces, the King arranged easy-to-climb staircases and comfortable seating. Every room was illuminated by hundreds of gem-studded lamps. The bedrooms were particularly magnificent, featuring beds and couches plated in gold and covered with the finest silks and deerskin rugs for the comfort of the visiting royalty.

The lakes and ponds of the city were prepared for the festival. Their waters were clear, and their banks were lined with smooth, comfortable stones. The surfaces of the water were nearly hidden beneath blankets of blooming lotuses, water lilies, and blue lotuses.

These waters were alive with the sounds of royal swans, ducks, cranes, and ruddy geese. Along the banks, peacocks danced, and cranes and herons played amidst the lush greenery.

The King ensured that the gardens surrounding these water bodies were perfectly maintained. These groves were a delight to the mind, the ears, and the nose, filled with the fragrance of blooming flowers and the melodious chirping of birds, providing a sanctuary of pleasure for the guests.

Like the legendary kings Nala, Shibi, and Yudhishthira, the virtuous King Vrishabhanu oversaw the preparation of vast quantities of food. Skilled cooks prepared various types of rice, cakes, and sweet milk puddings (payasam) to satisfy the thousands of invited guests.

O sinless Angiras! Hundreds of varieties of delicious vegetable dishes and sweets were prepared. The King gathered an abundance of flavorful, sweet fruits of all kinds and prepared countless other delicacies and snacks.

For those guests who partook, various types of seasoned meats from pure forest animals were prepared in all four ways: to be chewed, sucked, licked, and drunk, each seasoned with savory juices.

The powerful King, a lion among men, ordered his cowherds to bring forth massive quantities of fresh curd, milk, clarified butter (ghee), and fresh butter to be used in the feast.

Then, from all directions, great sages and knowers of Brahman began to arrive. These scholars were masters of the Vedas, history (Itihasa), Mimamsa philosophy, and the Puranas.

Among the gathered scholars, some were experts in astrology (Jyotisha), Vedanta, the limbs of the Vedas (Vedangas), and Nyaya logic. In the great assembly, some posed complex theological questions, others listened intently, and many engaged in deep debates.

Some spoke with such eloquence and speed that their words were compared to a rushing wind or a great storm. Their faces shone with the brilliance of their spiritual realization (Brahma-tejas), appearing as bright as the midday sun in summer.

Hundreds of elderly, learned ascetics and Sanyasis arrived. Some wore deerskins, while others wore only simple loincloths, their bodies covered in sacred ash. In their spiritual glow, they resembled a sacrificial fire that has just been fed with offerings of ghee.

O Sage! Many of these tapasvis (ascetics) arrived with bodies worn thin by severe penance. Their veins were visible beneath their skin, their stomachs were pressed against their backbones, and their eyes were deep-set in their sockets, yet they possessed immense spiritual power.

Some wore garments of bark or deerskin, while others wore nothing but a loincloth. Their heads were adorned with great mounds of matted hair (jata) that was tawny in color and reached down to their feet.

O Sage! Great leaders of various sects arrived—Shaktas, Shaivas, Vaishnavas, Sauras, and Ganapatyas—all carrying their ascetic staffs (danda) and water pots (kamandalu).

Sages by the thousands arrived, including Bharadwaja, Atri, Garga, Agastya, Jaimini, Gautama, Kashyapa, Jamadagni, and the warrior-sage Parashurama.

Others included Vibhandaka, Kaushika, the noble-minded Markandeya, Dadhichi, Mitra-Varuna, and the thousands of diminutive Valakhilya rishis.

The assembly was graced by Asita, Devala, Dhaumya, the great sage Dattatreya, Sumitra, Maitreya, Shunaka, and Bali.

Also present were the sages Baka, Dalbhya, Sthulashira, Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, and his son Sukadeva. Sumantu, the master of the Atharva Veda, was there along with Yajnavalkya and the Puranic storyteller Lomaharshana with his son.

Galava, Sandilya, Satyapalaka, and those who live only on air (Vayubhakshas) arrived with their sons and disciples.

O twice-born ones! Many Brahmanas came to see the grand assembly, some to enjoy the feast, and others, like matchmakers and bards, came seeking wealth and patronage for their services.

Scholars from the lineages of Kashyapa, Bhrigu, Atri, Angiras, Vashistha, Pulaha, and Kaushika arrived in great numbers, representing the finest Brahmana families.

In addition to the priests, many others gathered in the city of Vrishabhanu: Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, and wealthy merchants from far-off cities. Bards, heralds, actors, and thousands of dancers also arrived to perform at the wedding.

Then, the invited kings from various lands began to arrive. They came in their finest royal attire, riding in splendid vehicles, accompanied by their ministers, personal priests, and armies of servants.

From the kingdom of Gandhara came the powerful Shakuni, son of Subala, along with Achala and Vrishaka. The heroic Karna, the greatest of chariot warriors and King of Anga, also arrived.

From the kingdom of Madra came King Shalya, along with the powerful King Bahlika. Paundraka Vasudeva, King Ranga, and the King of Kalinga were also among those who reached the city.

The Kuru princes Bhuri, Bhurishrava, and Somadatta arrived, as did Ashwatthama, Kripacharya, and Dronacharya. Jayadratha, the King of Sindhu, also joined the gathering.

King Drupada of Panchala arrived with Dhrishtaketu and King Shalya of Saubha, accompanied by their sons. Kings from the islands and the mountains arrived, as did Bhagadatta, the son of Naraka, and King Brihadbala.

The King of the South (Antaka), the Lord of Kashi, and the kings of Kuntala and Akarsha were present. The kings of Dravida and Sinhala (Sri Lanka) arrived along with the King of Kashmir.

The King of Koshala, Sudyumna, along with Kuntibhoja and the Kamboja King Sudakshina, arrived. King Virata of Matsya came with his sons Shankha and Uttara.

Shishupala, the King of Chedi, came with his sons, as did the powerful Dantavakra. The venerable Bhishma of the Kuru race arrived with King Dhritarashtra and the sons of Pandu (the Pandavas).

From Mathura came Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Kamsa, and Devaka, representing the Vrishni and Andhaka clans. The intelligent Jarasandha, son of Brihadratha and King of Magadha, arrived with his full army.

Many other kings from various provinces arrived, driven by the desire to witness the wedding and to see the legendary beauty and grace of Vrishabhanu's daughter, Sri Radha.

Seeing all these sovereign kings arrive, the noble Vrishabhanu rose from his seat and greeted them with great respect and appropriate honors, welcoming them all with joy.

The King assigned these guests to palatial residences that were as beautiful as the peaks of Mount Kailash, each filled with every luxury and convenience."

"All the houses were equally elevated in every respect, surrounded on four sides by walls made of white stone, adorned with golden garlands, and graced by various collections of gems and jewel-encrusted pots of a bulbous shape.

The stairs of those houses were very easy to climb, decorated with highly prized garments, and covered with clusters of garlands; the interiors of the houses were scented with excellent aguru fragrance.

Shining like the milk of swans, visible from a distance of one yojana, the matchless temples and buildings had unobstructed, equal doorways and were endowed with various high qualities. With bodies variegated by many minerals, they appeared like the peaks of the Himalayas.

Into those houses, the immensely powerful kings entered with joyful hearts, followed by thousands of kinsmen, groups of cowherds, and invited relatives.

Dressed in various beautiful garments and ornaments with bodies glowing with diverse decorations, the cowherds living in his domain, being invited by the King, began to arrive at Vrishabhanu's house in carts drawn by bullocks, filled with curd, milk, ghee, and various abundant items of all kinds.

No one was dejected, and no one was slighted; everyone came conversing on many topics and watching the actors and dancers.

In various places, thousands of Brahmanas sat to feast with great joy; that place became filled with a great sound from the continuous noise, meaning: "Give! Give! Eat! Eat! Partake! Partake!" This was the only sound heard constantly.

The onlookers of the serving said to the serving Brahmanas: "O Brahmanas! This one's leaf appears empty, give him something." To the eager Brahmanas they said: "O masters! Eat, eat, and drink these beverages; why are you in a hurry? Without being restless, eat all the food items in proper measure with a content heart; dine with such consideration that it may be well-digested in the end."

The overseers of the relatives wandered everywhere, appointing people to their respective tasks. From their mouths issued only these words: "O you! Be steady, be still! O singers! Begin singing the songs! O bards! Recite the praises! O genealogists! You all describe the lineages!" To the carriers of goods, they said: "You go to the storehouse, do not delay!" Going to the residence of the relatives, some said: "Sirs, sleep in this place, come and sit in this place." To one they said this, to another they said that: "Go, brother, bring the invited people with respect; see that no slight occurs in any way."

Then, with many Vedic-knowing Brahmanas present, the great King Vrishabhanu proceeded to perform the auspicious magalika deeds and ancestral rites for prosperity.

After satisfying the deities, the members of the assembly, the lovers of Brahman, and the Brahmanas with worship, gifts, and food, King Vrishabhanu, holding kusha grass in hand, stood with a joyful heart awaiting the arrival of the groom and the wedding party.”

Thus ends the sixteenth chapter, titled "The Preparations for the Marriage of Sri Radha," in the dialogue between Brahma and the Seven Sages, from the Radha-Hridayam of the Uttara-Khanda of the Brahmanda Purana, within the Paramahamsa Samhita composed by Vyasa.

Chapter Seventeen: The Groom's Arrival and Sri Radhika’s Marriage

Brahma said: "O son Angiras! Listen. Hearing the message of the high-souled Vrishabhanu and the description of the beauty and qualities of the girl from the mouths of the minister and the women, Malyaka, the father of the groom, was then greatly delighted in heart."

Desiring to go before Vrishabhanu for the wedding of his son, the great cowherd Malyaka summoned and brought to his city bards, great genealogists, bards of praise, skilled musicians and singers, and actors and dancers.

Inviting and bringing Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, many merchants, and many people of other castes, he brought to his house kinsmen, kinsfolk, friends, relatives, and city dwellers by invitation.

He carefully invited and brought elders, ministers, priests, and Brahman-knowing sages.

Then Malyaka invited Mitra-daksha, the father-in-law of his eldest son Madana, along with his younger brothers, sons, wife, wealth, garments, and following kinsmen.

He invited Bahusena, the father-in-law of his second son Durmada, along with his sons, wife, kinsmen, friends, servants, and army.

The third son Dama's father-in-law, the noble Vasu, lord of the Yamuna region born of a great lineage, was invited along with his sons, friends, kinsmen, and wife. Thereafter, they all arrived at the wedding city for the marriage invitation.

He invited and brought the primary son-in-law Nanda and the daughter Yashoda, along with Sri Krishna and Balarama, and the prominent cowherds Upananda, Mahananda, Prananda, and Parinanda.

He invited and brought to his house with respect the middle son-in-law Sudyumna, husband of Kutila, and the middle daughter Kutila, along with servants, army, friends, followers, kinsmen, and well-wishers.

He invited the youngest daughter Prabhakari and the youngest son-in-law Hema along with his father, brothers, well-wishers, friends, kinsmen, and followers with their garments and servants.

The wealthy Malyaka brought these three sons-in-law and their families with honor using great vehicles, horses, excellent elephants, bullock-drawn carts, and various chariots.

Then the noble-minded Malyaka had the deities worshipped in every temple with various items and animal offerings and flowers by Vedic-chanting Brahmanas.

Malyaka, the best of cowherds, then personally performed the divine, ancestral, and rishi deeds for prosperity. That is, he completed the worship of the sixteen Matrikas and the long-lived ones like Markandeya, the offering of clarified butter, the chanting for longevity, and the ancestral Shraddha, and had all other auspicious deeds completed according to the rules and at the proper time by god-like great sages. That is, he had Shasthi, Mangalachandi, Vastudeva, Panchanana, Sudhachani, and Jalakumari, etc., worshipped.

The Journey of the Groom and the Wedding Party

Then, the beauty of the departing wedding party is described. Taking the gathered sages and Brahmanas, the wealthy merchants, cowherds, gopis, and the Kshatriya and Vaishya kings—all adorned with gold necklaces, wearing swinging earrings, decorated with beautiful jewel garlands and flower garlands upon their bodies—Malyaka set out with them all.

Furthermore, the chariot-warriors, their bodies covered and decorated with various ornaments, holding various weapons in their hands, wearing diverse garments, mounted their chariots and followed the groom.

Some rode on horses and elephants, some in excellent chariots, others with steady minds in carts, and thousands were carried in palanquins.

Warriors with shields and armor, archers with quivers, and those with spears, clubs, hammers, tridents, maces, and discs, wearing excellent turbans—all these soldiers, including those with slings and shakti spears, moved in two divisions, going in front on both sides of the groom; at that time, everyone was amazed seeing the beauty of the well-equipped soldiers.

Then, with arms bound with red thread, decorated with beautiful and diverse garments and ornaments, and wearing a crown, the steady-minded Ayana, dressed in the groom's attire with weapon in hand, was seated upon an excellent vehicle at an auspicious moment during the festive rituals.

Thereafter, all the cowherds, adorned with all ornaments, followed behind the groom, moving with a playful gait, discussing various topics, and joking.

Others moved along roaring with deep voices, leaping and jumping, some singing beautiful songs that were nectar to the ears, and others watching the play of the fellow travelers.

Arriving near the city of the high-souled Vrishabhanu, Malyaka, with a joyful heart, sent a very wise, sweet-spoken, and calm-minded Brahmana messenger quickly to Vrishabhanu’s house to give news of their arrival.

Hearing the news of the groom's arrival from the mouth of the messenger, the high-souled Vrishabhanu, with joy and accompanied by ministers, his group, and the priest, arrived at the place where Malyaka was staying to receive them.

Taking them, the high-souled Vrishabhanu proceeded toward his own city with great magnanimity. Desiring to see those who had arrived in various forms, the women of the city, covering themselves behind the lattices of the windows, climbed onto the rooftops. Other beautiful women observed the groom through the curtained window-openings.

O Sage! With the songs of the singers accompanying the groom, the tumult of various instruments, the lion-like roars of the heroic soldiers, and the shouting of the warriors, the directions, sub-directions, and the very sky became completely filled and echoed.

Then, dismounting from the vehicle at the city gate, the groom, with Krishna on his lap, entered the city. King Vrishabhanu brought that groom, along with his servants, army, and vehicles, with great honor into the assembly hall within the city.

Accompanied by his followers, friends, kinsmen, and Brahmanas, Vrishabhanu joyfully seated the groom on an exalted seat and performed the welcoming rites.

The King Vrishabhanu, being pure and holding kusha grass, caused the groom, who also held kusha grass, to be seated. Then, in the presence of the deities and the fire, King Vrishabhanu had the Brahmanas perform the Svastivachana (invocations of welfare).

After properly worshipping the groom with Madhuparka, garments, ornaments, scents, and garlands, the King brought his daughter, who was not born from a womb and possessed an auspicious face, adorned with many ornaments, into the wedding pavilion.

That daughter, the enchantress of all, wore silk garments suitable for royalty, encrusted with rubies and excellent gems; she was exquisitely beautiful with a red thread bound around her left wrist.

Her two high, round, dark-colored breasts, like well-prepared drums, were covered with garlands of fragrant Malati and Mallika flowers; they heaved with the weight of her movement as she arrived.

With her waist slightly bent from the weight of her heavy thighs and hips, she entered the marriage assembly, captivating the minds of young men with the playful movements of her eyes.

Beholding her, the minds of all present were pierced by the arrows of the god of love, and everyone simultaneously fell into a state of great delusion. At that time, no man in that assembly remained conscious of his surroundings.

Some people from the groom's side moved the weapons. Then, like offering the sacrificial butter to a crow, Vrishabhanu desired to give his daughter—who was beautiful in all her limbs and enchanting—to Ayana. Considering him unworthy, Sri Krishna, who was seated on Ayana’s lap, in great rage, took away his manhood; that is, He rendered Ayana a eunuch.

Instantly, He removed Ayana's masculine nature and provided him with a nature contrary to his original one. This act was not strange for Bhagavan, for at whose

mere hint the creators, maintainers, and destroyers—Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara—are dissolved, what act is impossible for Him in this world? Who is capable of obstructing the deeds resolved by the consideration of that inconceivable, imperishable Supreme Person?

The Lord Urukrama, Krishna, having fulfilled the prayer desired by His beloved Radha, placed Ayana behind Him, extended His own right hand, and took the hand of that jewel among daughters, thereafter uttering "Badham" (so be it) as the word of acceptance.

O Sage Angiras! King Vrishabhanu, having given away the daughter, placed a collection of gems in Sri Krishna's hand as the dakshina (honorarium). Sri Krishna accepted them, saying "Svastti" (may it be well). But King Vrishabhanu was unable to perceive even a fraction of this true reality. What then to speak of others?

Thereafter, with great joy and a gladdened soul, King Vrishabhanu gave as a dowry to the son-in-law various riches, royal silk garments, hundreds of female servants wearing gold necklaces, and hundreds of male servants.

He also gave the son-in-law two hundred sixty-year-old elephants, two hundred horses, and fifty excellent chariots accompanied by warriors armed with superior weapons and adorned with gems, rubies, and garlands. At that time, he also gave five hundred cows that yielded abundant milk along with their calves.

He gave many valuable clothes, blankets, woolens, deerskins, and many gems such as rubies and pearls, many hundreds of ornaments made of gems and diamonds, hundreds of infantry soldiers, many donkeys, camels, and buffaloes, and a hundred villages as a dowry to the son-in-law.

Thereafter, King Vrishabhanu satisfied and bid farewell to the many uninvited Brahmanas, the elderly, the lame, the disabled, the many orphans and poor, the fatherless and motherless boys, as well as the musicians, singers, bards, actors, and the Suta-Magadha heralds, by giving them abundant wealth.

The King bid farewell to the kings and the cowherds with great honor and respect. They all, with joyful hearts, began to bless the couple while providing appropriate wedding gifts.

Having received the blessings and offered their prostrations, the bride and groom mounted the groom's vehicle. Thereafter, everyone else, with joyful minds, mounted their respective vehicles and departed for their own homes.

From that time onward, the cowherd youth Ayana would sigh deeply and warmly. He could never find any peace of mind, remaining always submerged in an ocean of worry, unable to achieve happiness on any day.

Whether lying down, sitting, walking, eating, or bathing, Ayana, overcome by deep anxiety, felt not the slightest bit of pleasure. "What has become of me?" thinking this within himself, he spent his days lamenting repeatedly.

Nothing pleased him; his mind remained perpetually dejected. Seeing him in such a state, the cowherd youths of his age, desiring to know the cause of his grief, once asked him about the entire situation.

Being asked by those cowherd youths, Ayana, burning day and night with grief, described in detail the circumstances of his current condition to those cowherd youths of the same age.

Learning all the details of his condition from Ayana, the cowherd youths quickly went and related everything in detail to Ayana’s father Malyaka and his mother Jatila.

Hearing this unfavorable news from the mouths of the youths, both Malyaka and Jatila were overcome with great grief. With hearts scorched by sorrow, they remained as if unconscious and exhausted.

Thus ends the seventeenth chapter, titled "The Groom's Arrival and Sri Radhika’s Marriage" in the dialogue between Brahma and the Seven Sages, from the Radha-Hridayam of the Uttara-Khanda of the Brahmanda Purana, within the Paramahamsa Samhita composed by Vyasa.

Chapter Eighteen: The First Union of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna

Brahma said: "O best of sages, Angiras! Now I shall describe in detail the manner in which the union of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna took place. Listen to the account."

"Once, on the enchanting banks of the Yamuna, there was a grove adorned with beautiful vines and filled with the fragrance of various budding flowers. It was crowded with Mallika, Bakula, Jati, Yuthi, and Lakucha trees."

"That forest region was surrounded by hundreds of bowers made of vines. In the blooming flowers, swarms of intoxicated bees, greedy for nectar, hummed with sweet sounds. The place was graced by the lovely rays of the rising moon, serving as the abode of the god of love—a place that kindles desire in all hearts."

"At that time, the illustrious son of Devaki, Sri Krishna, surrounded by some cowherd boys, beheld the beauty of that forest and turned His mind toward the festival of the god of love. He desired to perform pastimes with the group of beautiful women."

"The Lord, the soul of all beings, Govinda, then sounded His flute with a sweet, enchanting tone to call Sri Radha into the forest—she whose heart was pierced by the arrows of the god of love."

"Sri Krishna, signaling through the sound of His flute, repeatedly called out to Radhika. He said, 'O Radha! O giver of pleasure to my heart! O one with limbs enchanting in every way! O beloved! Come quickly to this secluded forest. I am being scorched by the fire of love; now, by embracing you and immersing myself in that cool water, I shall extinguish this fierce fire of passion.'"

"O most beautiful in all the world! O one of excellent character! O virtuous one! I have become nearly dead, mangled by the sharp arrows of the god of love. O timid one! Revive me by granting the nectar of your lips. Trapped in this net of agony, I can no longer continue this journey of life.'"

"Hearing the sound of the flute, Radha became exceedingly restless and fell into a state resembling a swoon of love. Her companions recognized her state of passion by His signs; they saw that Radha’s mind was so captivated by the flute-song of Sri Krishna that she had lost all external awareness."

"From the moment she heard the signal of the flute, Sri Radha abandoned all actions—sleeping, sitting, and eating. Her mind remained perpetually fixed on Sri Krishna. Meditating on His form and speaking only of His qualities, she thought only of going to Him. She wondered constantly, 'When will I go to Sri Krishna and behold that heart-stealing form of Madana-mohana?'"

"With her heart captivated by the song of the flute, the daughter of Vrishabhanu became intensely longing and, leaving everything behind, devoted herself solely to hearing the glories of Sri Krishna. She had no desire to hear any words other than those concerning Sri Krishna. In such a restless state, she took her companions and went to the place where her beloved, the holder of the flute, the auspicious and enchanting Sri Krishna, was waiting."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O son! Seeing Radha arriving in His presence accompanied by her companions, Krishna, with a slight smile, spoke words to them that were enchanting yet, on the surface, appeared harsh—though they were full of internal meaning. Hiding His own desire, He expressed the eagerness of the Gopis."

"With great cleverness, Sri Krishna asked the devoted Gopis: 'O beautiful ones! I see you possess enchanting grace and youth; who are you? For what reason and for what desired purpose have you come at night to this dense, secluded forest, inhabited by serpents and tigers and frequented by thieves? You are virtuous wives and sinless. Tell me, what prayer brings you to me? It is not proper for noble women to remain in such a place.'"

Sri Radha said: "O Lord! O All-pervading One! I am a servant purchased by the dust of Your feet. I have sought refuge in Your lotus feet and have become thin through extreme sorrow. O Lord! O protector of those who seek shelter! O friend of the distressed! Do not be cruel and abandon me."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O wise Angiras! Hearing these words from the lotus-mouth of Sri Radha, the moon-like face of Govindachandra became joyful. Saying 'Come, come,' He extended His arms and embraced her, joyfully kissing her lips that resembled the Bimba fruit."

"Then Sri Krishna, surrounded by the circle of Gopis, began to sing and dance with them all. With a heart full of supreme joy, He laughed loudly. Sometimes, He would pull His beloved to Him in an embrace and seat her upon His lap."

"O Brahman! Janardana Sri Krishna then placed in the mouth of Sri Radha—whose lips are like the Bimba fruit—betel leaves (tambula) scented with flowers, aguru, and camphor."

"Sri Krishna dressed Her in two garments that were stainless, white as fire-cleansed cloth, and full of great splendor. He placed around her neck a garland of lotuses that never fade and a garland of blooming Parijata flowers."

"He placed rings made of priceless gems and rubies on all her fingers. Removing the great jewel named Kaustubha from His own neck—which possesses the brilliance of a thousand suns—He fastened it around the neck of His beloved."

"Placing an incomparable ring made of the Danta gem on Sri Radha's finger, Sri Govinda—the protector of the cows in the form of a youth—took garlands of Malati, Mallika, and Yuthi flowers woven by His own hands and placed them around His beloved's neck, letting them hang down to her chest."

"Sri Krishna gave Sri Radha two excellent garments given to Him by Varuna—robes decorated with various minerals and designs. He also gave her a garland of golden lotuses provided by Varuna. He placed upon Sri Radha's lotus feet the sweet-sounding anklets (nupura) made of gems, which were brought by Svaha, the wife of Agni."

"On Sri Radha's arms, Sri Krishna placed a pair of flawless armlets (keyura) brought by Himself from Chaya, the wife of the Sun. In her ears, He placed the blazing earrings, bright as fire, which were given with love by Rohini, the beloved of the Moon."

"He gave her rings inscribed with enchanting letters made of the finest radiant gems, which Rati, the beloved of the god of love, had previously used to worship Sri Krishna. For her play, He placed in Radha's hand a wondrous toy-lotus crafted by Vishvakarma."

"For her play, He gave her a string of beads made of ivory, white and beautifully carved. He also decorated her with various ornaments made of gems and rubies crafted by the celestial architect, placing each ornament where it would most enhance her beauty."

"O Sage Angiras! Then Sri Krishna decorated her's cheeks with beautiful designs and curls of hair. One by one, He created enchanting patterns on her cheeks with dots of saffron (kunkuma)."

"Murari Sri Krishna placed a vermilion mark (tilaka) on the parting of Sri Radha's hair, which looked like the flame of a lamp. He painted her toenails with red lacquer (alakta), making them look as beautiful as land-lotuses."

"O Sage! Then Sri Krishna repeatedly placed the lotus feet of Sri Radha—reddened with lacquer—upon His own chest and said again and again, 'O Radha! O Devi! I am Your eternal servant; have mercy on me.'"

"Saying 'O Radha! I am Your servant' repeatedly in a humble tone, Sri Krishna—the expert in love—took Sri Radha to His chest, mounted a gem-studded chariot, and began to sport with her in bower after bower."

"Krishna is the Supreme Soul—without qualities, steady, peaceful, effortless, and without bonds. Although He is technically bodyless and changeless, He appeared to be attached to the dharma of the body. Like a clear crystal taking on the color of a nearby object, He appeared attached to Radha, colored by her devotion. In truth, Sri Krishna does nothing; Radha performs everything, though the world regards Sri Krishna as the doer."

"Though He is beyond the control of all in every matter, Sri Krishna appeared to be under the control of the young women. Accompanied by Radha, He sported along the banks of the Yamuna, by the shores of beautiful lakes, and along the banks of lovely rivers."

"In the groves scented by the fragrance of flower-garlands and echoing with the humming of intoxicated bees, wherever the heart found joy and love, the large-eyed Radha and the large-eyed Krishna became absorbed in union. The beauty of that moment cannot be described: Radha, like a golden vine, clung to the

body of Sri Krishna, who had the dark hue of a Tamala tree, just as a flash of lightning adorns a water-laden cloud."

"The expert in love, Sri Krishna, wandered from one forest to another with the love-expert Sri Radha—in dense places covered with vines, on the shores of every river and lake, in every mountain cave, and by every lake filled with clear water."

"In every bower covered with fresh vines, by every river and stream, in every direction, and sometimes even traveling through the sky, the two wandered together, immersed in the juice of love."

"They sported on the banks of the Pushpabhadra river where gentle breezes blow, in the sandalwood forests of the Malaya mountains, in the caves of the Govardhana mountain, and in the celestial gardens and forests of the gods."

"In the heavenly gardens of the gods, in the forests of Kalpa-trees created by the suras, in the Chaitraratha forest on Mount Gandhamadana, and in the Nandan grove atop Mount Mandara. They sported amidst the lotuses and lilies in the water and in enchanting places shaded by the new leaves of great trees."

"In the midst of blooming, fragrant Ketaki forests, in enchanting woodlands adorned with fresh Madhavi vines, by the cool-flowing mountain springs, in groves of Malati, Kunda, and white lilies, and in beautiful forests of Baka flowers."

"In the forests where the branches and leaves of the Palasha and Santanaka trees were shaken by gentle winds, and in the forests of Parijata flowers echoing with the humming of bees greedy for nectar."

"In enchanting houses surrounded by flowering vines where bees hummed, and in the Kadamba forests dear to Hari. In those places filled with blooming branches and birds, Radhakanta (the beloved of Radha) sported with Radha in seclusion."

"He was adorned with a beautiful crown of Gunja berries, and she with her sweet-sounding anklets. He wore a garland of Malati flowers, and she was adorned with flower-garlands in the forest."

“Sri Krishna, wearing enchanting anklets, immersed himself in tireless pastimes with Sri Radha, who wore anklets that hummed like bees. He, the wearer of the

forest-flower garland, was adorned with falling Malati blossoms, while his beloved Sri Radha was draped in garlands of blooming jasmine.

With their hair disheveled and then rearranged, the two experts in the science of love—Madhusudana and the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha—continued to enjoy their amorous play in the forests and groves, passing their time in constant union.

For many days, Sri Radha and Sri Krishna, who had assumed human forms for their pastimes, spent their time in the joys of love with supreme affection. Eventually, from the friction of the arrows of the god of love, a fire of passion arose, as fierce as the flames of dissolution at the end of an age.

That love grew incessantly, just as a fire blazes higher when fed with clarified butter."

The Manifestation of the Form of Kali

"After they had spent some days sporting thus in happiness, Jatila, noticing Sri Radha in the house, observed her high bosom and the extraordinary glow of her beauty, which increased daily due to the touch of a man. Having not seen her in the house for many days, Jatila began to suspect her character.

Overcome with anxiety and noticing the various expressions and gestures of Sri Radha, Jatila called her son Ayana to her side and spoke."

Jatila said: "O son! Listen to what I say. Your wife, the daughter of Vrishabhanu, is not seen in the house for long periods. Tell me, what should I do? O Ayana! I have searched for her through servants and maids in every house of the thousands of cowherds in the city, but I found her nowhere."

Significance: Sri Radha, bound by the ropes of love for Sri Krishna, is constantly engaged in his service, wandering through various forests for amorous play, forgetful of her own home. Perceiving her character to be compromised by Krishna, Jatila spoke these words to Ayana.

"O child! She often wanders out, occasionally returning home, but this time I have not seen her for many days. I do not know where she goes every day. When she

does return and is questioned, she says she went to worship Katyayani. Listen to what she told me a few days ago: 'O noble lady! In this land of Vraja, the Great Goddess Katyayani is always my bestower of boons and auspiciousness; therefore, I daily perform her vow.' But, my son, I did not believe her words because I have observed signs to the contrary in her nature."

"O son Ayana! I have searched for her in the forests, the bowers, the caves of Govardhana, and on the banks of the Yamuna, but I could not find her. I do not know where this young woman is alone or what she is doing."

Brahma said: "O Angiras! Hearing these words from his mother, the wicked-minded Ayana—who already felt diminished by his lack of manhood and was constantly suspicious of Radha—became filled with grief and rage. His face turned pale, and he could not decide on a proper course of action."

Taking up a heavy club, the powerful Ayana, driven by anger and a wounded heart, rushed out to search for Radha along the banks of the Yamuna and in the caves of the mountains. He searched through mountain fortresses, groves of blooming flowers, and the shores of rivers and lakes.

In the fragrant flower gardens and the vine-covered bowers of the Malaya and Gandhamadana regions, Ayana searched for the beautiful Sri Radha. However, overcome by grief, delusion, hunger, and thirst, he became exhausted and fell unconscious on the path. Seeing him fallen, his fellow cowherd companions quickly arrived, sprinkled him with cool water, held his arms to raise him up, and comforted him.

O Angiras! How could the dull-witted Ayana, covered in dust and devoid of senses, ever hope to uncover the illusion of the Great Illusionist? Sri Krishna was sporting with Radha nearby in the Yamuna grove, yet no one could see Him. The Maya of the Lord is impassable for the small-minded; even Shiva, Brahma, and the other gods remain eternally deluded by it. Therefore, it was impossible for a mere mortal like Ayana to understand it.

As the cowherds approached the grove on the banks of the Yamuna, Sri Krishna manifested His supreme divine power. Sri Krishna set aside His form as Krishna and assumed the form of the Goddess Kali to appear before Ayana.

Ayana Beholds the Form of Kali

Brahma said to Angiras: "O son! Hear now the description of the form of Kali assumed by Sri Krishna. His complexion was like that of a fresh rain cloud. In His four arms, He held the flute and a sharp sword. From His ears hung ornaments in the shape of infant corpses, swinging to and fro. His chest was adorned with a beautiful forest garland."

"He wore a garland of human heads that looked like gems. His waist was wrapped in an exquisite yellow cloth, and on His forehead, a tilaka of sandalwood paste shone like a half-moon. He possessed three terrifying, large eyes that blazed like the sun. His face was slightly smiling, and His cheeks were graced by gem-studded earrings. His four arms were adorned with armlets and bracelets. On His head, He wore a crown decorated with peacock feathers and a magnificent diadem woven with rubies and coral. Such was the enchanting form Sri Krishna assumed."

"There, Sri Radha—the best among all women—sat before this form of the Mother of the World, worshipping her with deep concentration, offering Madhuparka, incense, lamps, and various offerings. With a heart full of joy, she was immersed in meditating upon the lotus feet of the Goddess."

"Seeing Sri Radha prostrating repeatedly with her head to the ground and offering prayers as beautiful as a garland of lotuses, Ayana approached quickly. Beholding the Goddess Kali, he prostrated at her lotus feet and felt himself to be truly blessed."

"Filled with thrill, Ayana then called over the thousands of cowherds and gopis—including his mother Jatila and sister Kutila—to witness the pure and noble devotion of Radhika."

"Beholding her thus, the cowherds and the women of Vraja were struck with immense wonder. With eyes blooming like lotuses, they said: 'O Ayana! You are virtuous, you are blessed! For through your wedded wife, the beautiful Sri Radha, we have been granted the vision of the Mother of the World, Goddess Kali. Such a woman is rare among mortals. You and all of us are sanctified by her.'"

"Filled with humility, the cowherds said to Ayana: 'O son of Jatila! O greatly fortunate Ayana! This most excellent maiden, Sri Radhika, who is ever auspicious and benevolent, is not to be restrained by you, nor by her mother-in-law, nor by any of us. Rather, know this with certainty: the action which we see being undertaken here is solely for our own welfare and ultimate good. In this matter, it would not be proper to regard Rādhā as a woman acting improperly or to accuse her of any blameworthy conduct.”

Brahma said: "All those women, seeing this [the manifestation of Kali], became overwhelmed with astonishment and longing. Hearts filled with joy, they embraced the Goddess [Sri Radha] and bathed her with tears from their eyes."

Thus ends the eighteenth chapter, titled "The Vision of Sri Krishna's Form as Kalika," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Uttar-khanda of the Sri Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Nineteen: The Entry of Sri Radha and Krishna into Vrindavan

Brahma said: further to the great sages headed by Angiras: "O children! The cowherds and gopis, after prostrating to the Great Goddess, departed for their respective homes, and Ayana also took Sri Radhika back to serve her. After they had all withdrawn and Ayana had returned to his abode with his mother, Sri Krishna withdrew His form as Kali and, together with Radha, entered the beautiful Vrindavan forest, the place of delightful pastimes. Its beauty is described hereafter."

"O sinless Angiras! Into the heart-ravishing Sri Vrindavan, which is adorned with numerous groves and served by the cowherds and gopis, Madhusudana Sri Krishna entered with Sri Radha, longing for pastimes."

"The trees of Vrindavan enhanced the supreme beauty of that place. There stood Champaka, Ashoka, Punnaga, Nagakeshara, and Keshara; Mallika, Malati, Karanduka, Karavi, and Yuthi."

"Also the flowering Aparajita vine, the Baka-flower tree, the Guchchha-flower (Kamini and similar varieties), and Bhumi-champaka. There was also the fragrant Ketaki, Tulasi, Amalakī, Andhaka, and the beautifully blooming Gandharaja."

"The victorious Jayanti, Jaba, Tagara, Kurubaka, and groves of Kunda; also the Labanga tree, Jati-phala tree, the fragrant blooming Muchukunda, Laba, Maliba, and Lakucha trees."

"White, red, blue, and yellow Jhinti; the land-lotus, Magadha, Basanti, Madhavi-vines, Drona-flowers, Jati-flowers, Rillika, and various types of Yaba—striped, yellow, white, and pale-red in color—adorned the place."

"Blooming Sharat-mallika, garlands of Shephalika, the beautiful scented Bakula tree, and clusters of flowers graced by the sweet humming of bees; the Paribhadra-Mandara and the Parijata trees, whose fragrance spreads for a yojana."

"Kapittha, Dadhittha, Nimba, Hintala, Piyala, Amra (mango), Panasa (jackfruit), Kadamba, Santana, and Amrataka trees of various kinds adorned the Vrindavan region."

"The king of grasses Gubaka (betel nut), Kharjura (date palm), the Kobidara-Kanchana tree, Badari, Bibhitaki, Haritaki, and Tintidi (tamarind) trees surrounded the area."

"The king of trees Ashvattha, Dhara, Dhataki, and forests of Red Sandalwood were scattered there; Bilva, Tala, Tamala, Khadira trees, and groves of Kichaka bamboo covered the forest."

"The Shami, Kinshuka-Palasha, Shalmali; the Banyan tree with its many feet, Tinduka, Lodhra, the Tapasa tree, Jibotpatrika, Pankur, Arjuna, various types of Lakucha, White Sandalwood trees, and thickets of cane covered the area like a cloud."

"The orange (Nagaranga), Kamaranga, lemon (Jambira), Coconut, and various other trees adorned the place; the excellent trees of Vrindavan were laden with eternal fruits and clusters of flowers that attracted swarms of bees."

"Spring, Summer, Autumn, Late Autumn, Rainy season, and Winter—all six seasons appear there eternally, offering flowers and fruits appropriate to their time and worshipping the Lord."

"The dwellers of Vrindavan are always engaged in laughter, jesting, and play; they are most enchanting in their musical conversations, adorned with ornaments and wearing attire suitable for amorous love, eternally sporting with their beloveds."

"In beautiful Vrindavan, the Lord is served by the personified Oceans, lords of rivers; the area is surrounded by holy temples and beautified by large and small rivers and collections of water such as ponds and lakes."

"There are long lakes adorned with lotus thickets, and streams flowing from mountain slopes; the waters of the lotus-filled lakes are moved into waves by the wind, and the forest regions are pleasing to the eyes, colored by bees attracted to the flowers."

"In every water body, blooming, half-blooming, and budding lotuses in a hundred clusters—white and red—adorn the scene, along with Kumuda, Kahlara, and Kokanada (red water-lilies)."

"The forest regions are beautified by swarms of bees drinking nectar and singing sweet songs; the cuckoos sing in voices that satisfy the ears, and Vrindavan is constantly echoing with the calls of water-fowls like swans and Karandavas."

"Herons, cranes, Ruddy geese (Chakravaka), and flocks of water-hens with sweet calls; the forest echoes with the sweet sounds of Datyuha birds and the calls of roosters and wild fowls."

"The temple groves are served by parrots, pigeons, and excellent peacocks; the Vrindavan region is made heart-pleasing by the flying and playing of crows and owls, and it echoes with the calls of hawks and other birds."

"Covered by hundreds of vultures and herons, and served by Gandharvas who are leaders of song; the area is adorned by swarms of bees attracted by the fragrance of nectar flowing from newly arrived flowers, carried by the breeze."

"Flowering vines and clusters of bushes that are enchanting with blossoms—bees hum everywhere in these thickets, drawn by the desire for honey, making the Vraja region beautiful."

"The Vrindavan forest is adorned with herds of Chamarī deer, bears, monkeys, tigers, lions, boars, jackals, buffaloes, and swarms of serpents."

"Horses, mules, donkeys, blackbucks, hyenas, mongooses, and porcupines; and elephants as large as mountain peaks, accompanied by their female counterparts, wander here and there searching for grass."

"Rhinoceroses, wild cats, and various species of deer with variegated bodies, move through every forest in a joyful mood, immersed in waves of amorous play with their sweet-voiced beloveds."

"The forest is filled with animals of both fierce and peaceful natures, who have abandoned their violence and wander together making sounds; the woods are surrounded by Yakshas, Rakshasas, Pishachas, Uragas, Kinnaras, and Gandharvas."

"The Vrindavan forest is filled with flocks of birds and inhabited by Sadhyas, Maruts, Vidyadharas, Charanas, Yatudhānas, Nairritakas, and sages who are knowers of Brahman and all the Vedas."

"The attendants of the lover of Hara—Bhairavas, spirits, ghosts, Pishachas, and other Pramathas; Betalas, Vinayakas, and Kushmandas; the Nagas headed by Dhritarashtra; and monks, Sanyasis, and beggars—along with the personified Mountains, all reside eternally in Vrindavan with hearts anxious to see the Lord."

"Vrindavan is served on all sides by noble people who are free from violence, pride, and intoxication, and are devoted to Narayana, engaged in pastimes day and night."

"The forest is covered with hundreds of vine-bowers, adorned by the rays of the rising full moon, and scented by a gentle breeze carrying the fragrance of flower nectar."

"What wondrous beauty Vrindavan possesses! It is beautified by clusters of tender blooming flowers of the flowering vines; like the sound of sweet anklets, intoxicated bees hum, and the flower clusters sway in the gentle ripples of the breeze."

"The waters of the Kalindi (Yamuna) flowing through the middle are filled with various kinds of fish and terrifying crocodiles and sharks; it is beautified by waves raised by the wind. In such a Vrindavan, Sri Radha, the daughter of Vrishabhanu, surrounded by bees, became engaged in play with Sri Krishna."

"The dwellers of Vrindavan wear attire suitable for amorous love and ornaments that increase the festival of desire; their minds are all attached to union and their hearts are filled with mutual affection."

"Some are embracing their young beloveds, others are being embraced by their beloveds. Some have their faces kissed by their beloveds, others are kissing the faces of the beautiful women."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O child! In that eternal forest of bliss, some women, moving with a playful gait, are running after their beloveds; others are running after the fleeing beautiful women. O Lord of Sages! Some, having their bodies bitten by their beloveds, are in turn biting the faces of their beloveds again and again."

"Seeing some young women singing, their beloveds sing accordingly; others engage in play similar to the beautiful women's play. Others follow their jesting beloveds, speaking words of humor."

"Some laugh in imitation of the laughing women. Others sit as the women sit; others, with joyful minds, place a mouthful of betel (tambula) into the beautiful mouths of the fair-faced women who desire to chew it."

"After giving chewed betel to their beloveds, they, longing for that chewed betel, take it back from the mouths of their beloveds."

"Observing these various amorous behaviors of the youths and young women of Vrindavan, Sri Krishna, the Lord of all Yoga, standing in the midst of the Gopis, became desirous of union."

"Then Govinda, the soul of all, placing the flute to His lotus-mouth and filling it with the breath of His mouth, released the fifth note in the fifth melody (Panchama Raga); through sweet steps and songs that bring happiness to the mind and ears, He began to agitate the minds of the beautiful-eyed women with the juice of desire. That is, by uttering the seed of desire through the song of His flute, He stole the hearts of the passionate women."

"Hearing the sound of Hari's flute, all the Gopis became deluded and forgot themselves; their minds fixed on Sri Krishna, they became self-forgetful—knowing not who they were, where they were, or what they heard! The hearts of all were agitated, and seeing Sri Krishna, an intense longing arose in everyone."

"Hearing the sound of Sri Krishna's flute calling them, all the companions said to Sri Radha, the daughter of Vrishabhanu: 'O fortunate one! O companion! Listen with attention; that beloved son of Nanda, Sri Krishna, the ocean of pleasure, is showing grace to you and calling you repeatedly with the sound of His flute.'"

"'O Radha! Krishna is calling you with the sound of His flute; you are being sought by Him. That beloved Adhokshaja is waiting in the bower-hut, longing to see you.'"

"'O Radha! Sri Krishna is clearly uttering your name through the song of His flute, stealing our minds with sweet notes and clear syllables, signaling you repeatedly through song. O companion! Do not delay; set out for the tryst (abhisara) immediately.'"

"'Go now, O beautiful one! This sweet night is still covered in darkness and possesses an unmanifested glow; shortly, the forest bowers will take on a clear form like white camphor under the rays of the moon. Therefore, set out for the bower-forest now.'"

"'In the journey through the dark and difficult forest, there will be no risk of being seen. Abandon these ornaments and beautiful dress which are like enemies to your secret play.'"

"'O woman of enchanting character! Quickly remove those sweet-sounding anklets from your feet; do not delay. The King of Rasa, the Great Actor Syama, is waiting for you in the bower-forest.'"

"'O woman of enchanting smiles! We consider ourselves purified by you; you have made our bodies holy, for by gaining your companionship, the Supreme Soul Govinda, the Lord of all the worlds, will be visible to our eyes today.'"

"Hearing these sweet and significant signal-words of her companions, Radha, the deer-eyed one, longing to go to Krishna, abandoned her deep sleep and, rising in haste from her bed, stood ready."

"'O Vrinda! Where is the Lord of the helpless, the Master of the Universe, my life-lord Govinda, now waiting in pleasure for me? Tell me!' Saying only this, Sri Radha, becoming extremely restless, removed her sounding ornaments and, dressed in the attire of one going for a tryst, set out quickly to her beloved Sri Krishna."

"And the deer-eyed Gopis, her companions, followed behind Sri Radha in thousands of groups, singing of her qualities and deeds."

"Then, with the desire to touch the limbs of Sri Krishna, they all arrived quickly at the bower-forest together with Sri Radha."

"Seeing the beautiful-eyed women arriving, Krishna, by way of a ruse, hid His body within the thicket of leaves of the vines in the bower."

"Through this pastime, the most generous and skillful master of all illusion, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, remained hidden, desiring to know their minds and to see their excellent deeds."

"Observing that forest, Radha saw that the entire bower was cooled by the rays of the moon, and all directions were illuminated by the pure moonlight."

"Not seeing Sri Krishna in the forest, she became very bewildered. With a longing mind, taking her companions, she began to search in those places where she saw the earth goddess adorned and beautified by the footprints of Sri Krishna—marked by the thunderbolt, goad, barley-grain, flag, dot, and upward line."

"Being distressed by the absence of Krishna, those young Gopis, with their necks bowed in devotion, began to pray with regret near the footprints, their faces like blooming lotuses, meditating on the lotus feet of Sri Krishna."

"'Where are we—poor, miserable, and insignificant cowherd girls—and where is the most generous High-Souled Bhagavan Hari? Our association with Him is very difficult [to maintain].'"

"'How can this improbable juice of love be born [for us]? It is created only by His Maya.I am very poor and fallen, a personification of sorrow; there is no possibility of His love for me. I am merely bound by the ropes of false hope and am attempting to seek His association—this is the intent.

Or perhaps it is said that His birth on this earth is for the purpose of protecting the virtuous. But where is that virtue in me? Why would He show His grace toward me for that reason? Since the cause of virtue is the accumulation of past merits, I do not perceive any such past good deeds in myself.'

Sri Radha said: "Hear me, O Lord! I have taken refuge in Your lotus feet. Knowing me as one who has sought Your shelter, listen to my words spoken with a distressed heart. O Lotus-eyed one! These faults of mine, which are indicative of my audacity toward You, are worthy of Your forgiveness, for You are the Lord of the helpless. O Dear Friend! Be gracious toward these miserable Gopis whose lives are dedicated to You. Save us now by showing Your lotus-like face, which is joined to the flute that acts as the slayer of these weak cowherd women. O Bhagavan! Without seeing You, we are unable to sustain our lives for even half a moment. Therefore, O Achyuta! O Dear Beloved who is dearer than life! Reveal Your true form to us out of Your grace. If You do not come within the path of our vision in any way, then these lives of ours must surely be given up—either by hanging, by entering fire, or by drowning in water. That is, by tying a rope around our necks, or jumping into water, or entering a pyre, we shall die here this very instant. O

Beloved! If You ask where we shall find a rope in this terrifying and secluded forest at night to give up our lives—O Life-Lord! We shall have no shortage of that. We have these long braids of hair on our heads which are like long ropes fit for hanging; we shall tie these around our necks and give up our lives right now. If we do not attain You, we shall never return to our homes."

Having observed Sri Radha—who possesses broad thighs, broad hips, broad loins, and full breasts—fully resolved in her mind to die by tying her braid around her neck, Sri Krishna, who was hidden, watched her. Seeing the beautiful-eyed Sri Radha lamenting, Sri Krishna then appeared before her and wiped the falling tears from her eyes with His lotus-like hands, comforting her in various ways with words full of love. To that weeping, lotus-eyed Sri Radha who was overwhelmed with love, He spoke these words of consolation: "O Lotus-eyed one! O Faultless one of perfect beauty! O Queen of my life! If it is your desire, then today I shall engage in the Rasa dance with you, which is the most excellent of all pastimes."

The Devi said: "I bow to Your lotus feet, O Krishna with lotus-like eyes! I am Your purchased slave; purify me with the dust of Your feet, O Lord."

Brahma said: "O best of the twice-born, Angiras! Having spoken thus to her beloved, lotus-eyed Sri Krishna, the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha, her body heavy with love, placed a betel-roll scented with camphor and other fragrances into His lotus-like mouth."

Thus ends the nineteenth chapter, titled "The Arrival of Sri Krishna in Vrindavan," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Uttar-khanda of the Sri Brahmanda Purana.

Chapter Twenty: The Rasa-Lila of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna in Vrindavan

Angiras said: "O Lord! O Father of the Universe! A great desire has arisen in us to hear of the group of companions. If their nature and the nature of the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha, is based on the qualities of Krishna, O Master! Tell us that quickly if You have mercy upon us. For the immediate satisfaction of these miserable ones, please speak out of Your grace."

Brahma said: "O Brahman! You are a worthy recipient and dear to me, having sought my shelter. I shall describe this in detail according to my memory, my intellect, and as I have heard from the mouth of the Lord; listen with a focused mind. O best of sages! O Angiras! I shall state the names of those companions of Sri Radha in order, and I shall describe exactly how the first Rasa-Lila of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna began with the group of companions born from their own bodies."

"By the curse of Sri Radha, Ganga, the best of rivers, was born in the circle of Gokula as a Gopi named Chandravali. Like a companion to Radha, she is lotus-faced and lotus-eyed, and she too has thousands of companions. Together with them all, Chandravali arrived at the Rasa-mandala. Hear the names of Sri Radha's companions: Sukanjakshi, Kalakanthi, Sukanthi, Pikakantika, Kalavati, Rasollasa, Gunavati, and Utpalavati. Vishakha, Chandrarekha, Lilavati, Uparasika, Malika, Narmada, Premavati, and Kusuma-peshala. Nalini and Nalini—these two Gopis are scented with fragrance—Bhadra, Rangini, Lalita, Alasa, Manjistha, Rangavati, Kamada, and Kamamohini. Ananga-manjari, Raga, Subhanu, Sati, Anupama, Ragarekha, Kalakeli, Bindumati, and Unmukhi. Vichitra, Champakalata, Rangadevi, Sudevika, Tungavidya, Angalekha, the giver of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, Kama, and Sumanjari. Manjumedha, Shashikala, Sumadhya, Madhurekshana, Malaja, Chandralata, Madhavi, and Madanalasa. Madhurika, Chandrika, Premamanjari, Tanumadhyama, Kamala, Kamalata, Kantachuda, and Varangana. Kamasundari, Kamamanjari, Manikundala, Kadambari, Shalati, Chandrarekha, and Priyamvada. Madammoda, Madhumati, Vasanti, Kalabhashini, Ratnaveshi, Malati, and Karpura-tilaka. Kurangakshi, Kasturika, Manini, Madana-manjari, Sindura, Chandanavati, Kaumudi, and Mandala. Padmavati, Pankajakshi, Shyama, Saivya, Bhadrika, Tara, Chitra, Gandharvi, Palika, and Chandrapalika. Mangala, Vimala, Pita, Taralakshi, Manohara, Makunda, Tarini, Manjubhashini, and Khanjanekshana. Kaumodaki, Vishalakshi, Kairabi, Visharadi, Shankari, Kumuda, Krishna, Saranga, Drabini, and Shiva. Taravali, Gunavati, Sumukhi, Kelimanjari, Haravali, Chakorakshi, Bharati, and Kamini. O Brahmanas! These companions and hundreds and thousands of others arrived in the greatly wondrous Vrindavan with the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha. In the autumn season, on the night of the full moon of Kartika under the Krittika constellation, when every place in Vrindavan was kissed by the cool rays of the moon, the jewel

among women arrived there and made the forest even more blessed. They were covered with various ornaments and possessed beautiful forms; some had the hue of a Jaba flower and wore garments of dark blue."

“The arriving Gopis had their bodies covered with diverse ornaments; all were of wondrous forms and beautifully decorated with various robes and jewels. Some wore crimson garments like blooming Hibiscus flowers, while others wore clothes as dark as deep collyrium.

Some Gopis wore red robes like Pomegranate flowers, some wore garments of the color of molten gold, some wore dresses resembling the Ketaki flower, and some wore robes the color of intense lightning.

Some cowherd women had robes as bright as the Karnikara flower; others wore beautiful yellow garments like orpiment. Other Gopis wore clothes as radiant as the color of refined gold (Jambunada).

Some Gopis wore robes like the flash of lightning, while others wore white silver-colored garments. Some wore robes resembling water-laden clouds, and others wore garments as bright as the Ashoka flower.

Some Gopis had clothes the color of the Kinshuka flower; some wore beautiful garments like the hue of sulfur. Others wore white robes resembling milk, crystal, conch-shells, the moon, the Kunda flower, or camphor.

Some women wore robes of pure indigo or deep black; some wore clothes of a special orpiment hue. Others wore garments like the specific shades of the Hibiscus or Karnika flowers.

Some Gopis were dark-robed like the blue Jhinti flower; others wore yellow garments like the yellow Jhinti. Some had robes like Ketaki leaves, and some wore beautiful dark clothes resembling lotus leaves.

Some noble women’s garments were as red as copper land-lotuses; some wore clothes embroidered with gold, and others wore robes as transparent and clear as the moon.

All the Gopis possessed broad thighs and heavy, elevated hips. On their chests were pairs of high breasts resembling the frontal globes of a young elephant. All had slender waists and bodies bent under the weight of their bosoms.

Some Gopis were adorned with high breasts shaped like the buds of the most excellent lotuses. These daughters of cowherds, honored and blessed by the world, arrived with beautifully decorated forms.

The Gopis of Vraja, whose complexions were as beautiful as red lotuses or refined copper, could not remain inside their homes even when forbidden by their husbands. They abandoned their wicked husbands and rushed toward Sri Krishna. As they ran, the movement of their arm-like branches stirred the air like a strong breeze. Reaching the presence of Sri Krishna, these women of Vraja spoke to their life-beloved—this will be revealed later.

The Gopis arrived beautifully dressed. Some wore robes the color of a peacock's neck, some were dressed in black, some wore green like a parrot, and some had grey robes like a camel. All were of enchanting forms like goddesses. Their cheeks were beautiful to behold, illuminated by the glow of the swinging earrings on their ears.

With the sweet sound of ringing anklets on their feet and the jingling of bracelets on their moving arms, they imitated the humming of bees intoxicated by flower-nectar. The forest echoed with the sound of their ornaments, resembling the hum of bees.

Their heads were adorned with curly hair as dark as water-laden clouds, and their foreheads were beautified by locks of hair resembling a row of bees. These excellent women had very slender waists like lions and lean bellies.

Their enchanting limbs were worshipped with earrings, armlets, bracelets, and gem-studded necklaces. Their beautiful fingers resembled the lovely buds of the Champaka flower."

Brahma said: "O Angiras! Beholding the beautiful and well-formed limbs of that assembly of Gopis, even the Creator (Brahma) would quickly learn skill, for such

beauty is beyond the Creator's ordinary creation. They were adorned with various garlands of gems and flowers and decorated with diverse ornaments.

Because these Gopis are the enchantresses of the inconceivable and imperishable Bhagavan Narayana, they cannot be compared to ordinary beautiful women. Their bodies are free from all defects, and in age and grace, they are all like different forms of Goddess Lakshmi herself.

In the sweetness and tenderness of their speech, they enchant even the sweet-voiced male cuckoos; indeed, the cuckoos become bewildered upon hearing their voices. In grace and noble sweetness, they are the crest-jewels of the most clever and refined women.

Some walked with the slow, graceful gait of a young elephant intoxicated with wine. O Sage! All had long eyes like lotus petals and faces beautified by lovely limbs.

With their faultless limbs, they were like a flock of swans moving slowly, and through the perfect structure of their joyful limbs and gestures, they captivated the minds of all young men.

O child Angiras! The deer-eyed Gopis, dressed in beautiful robes, had their hearts stolen by Sri Krishna. Intensely longing for the sight of Krishna, with their minds fixed on Him, they wandered through the forests meditating on His form and conversing about His qualities.

The other Gopis were devoted to singing the glories of Sri Krishna, conversing about His greatness, and singing of His pastimes. With hearts full of great curiosity, laughing and jesting, they observed the beauty of the forest during the night.

The groups of women, possessing high and full breasts and driven by the madness of love, wandered through all of Vrindavan like maddened female elephants, dancing and making various amorous gestures.

The Commencement of the Rasa Festival

The expert of refined juice, Bhagavan Govinda, seeing the assembly of Gopis devoted to the Rasa festival, immediately called the group of cowherd boys

according to the Gopis' efforts. Sri Krishna turned His focused attention to the delight of the Gopis through the Rasa pastimes."

"O Sridaman! O Bala! O Stoka-Krishna! O Subala! O Venuka! Today I intend to perform the grand Rasa-Lila with the group of Gopis. Therefore, prepare the arena for it and gather the materials for the Rasa-mandala."

Sri Krishna commanded: "O Sridaman and other cowherd boys! All of you set up various ornaments, diverse garlands, and excellent thrones in various places fit for the Rasa pastimes. Fetch hundreds of excellent umbrellas and rolls of betel scented with camphor and other fragrances."

"And establish four gates around the Sri Rasa-mandala with enchanting gatekeepers for protection. Let all those gatekeepers, devoted to my pleasure, stand at every gate holding various weapons."

"O friends! Let the cowherd boys, who fulfill my desires, play various beautiful and sweet instruments with great enthusiasm for my satisfaction."

Brahma said: "O Sage! Having received the command of Bhagavan, Baladeva, the foremost of the powerful, joyfully had all the materials for the Rasa prepared by the cowherd boys."

In the beautiful Rasa-mandala, Sri Krishna sat with the Supreme Nature, Sri Radha, on an excellent throne made of the essence of gems, rubies, diamonds, and pearls.

Bhagavan, the Supreme Soul, the imperishable, the Supreme Abode, the eternally true, the liberated by nature, who is beyond nature, the best of all, the worshipable Supreme Person, the Lord of all—Govinda—took His seat.

His dark body resembled a fresh water-laden cloud, adorned with various wondrous gem-ornaments. Govinda had a slightly smiling lotus-face, a body curved in three places (Tribhanga), and His neck was beautified by the glowing Kaustubha gem. He was devoted to playing His flute, the slayer of the demon Mura.

His neck was beautified by a crown of Gunja berries and a Gunja garland. His left side was graced by His beloved Sri Radhika. His head was adorned with a crown of peacock feathers. Thus, the Supreme Soul in the form of Govinda shone within the Rasa-mandala.

His waist was adorned with a most wondrous and priceless yellow cloth. A garland of Kadamba flowers hung from His neck down to His feet. His lips were reddened by the juice of betel. He was looking at Balarama and the other boys. Everyone beheld the Supreme Soul, the Lord of cowherds, in this form.

Standing outside were the beloved companions, their gem-earrings swinging. These Gopis, beloved of Krishna—Chandravali, Chandrarekha, Chitra, Madanasundari, Shashirekha, and Madhumati—were stationed in order starting from the East.

Outside of them stood the sixteen dearest and primary beloveds of Krishna, with long, beautiful arms, slender waists, and eyes like those of a deer."

Their beauty and grace was equal to ten million Cupids. Though the god of love enchants the world, these Gopis appeared as the personified enchantresses of that very Cupid. In other words, just as Sri Krishna is the churner of the mind (Manmatha-mathana), these Gopis are the churners of the mind of that churner. This implies they are the pure embodiment of bliss, free from any worldly lust, serving Sri Krishna who is Himself the embodiment of bliss.

Outside that circle stood thousands of mature (Praudha) Gopis, intensely eager in the sentiment of love. They were exceedingly clever, yet they possessed forms equal to those of adolescent girls (Kishoris). They were decorated with similar ornaments and had their bodies anointed with similar fragrances. Although mature, in their gestures, playful movements, and dalliance, they were equal to young maidens.

The breasts of these young women were slightly bowed, and their variegated garments were ruffled by the wind. The cheeks of everyone were beautified by the glow of brilliant gem-studded earrings. Among them, some were engaged in playing the cymbals (karatala), while others were full of enthusiasm in playing the sweet mridanga drum. That is, they were highly expert in these instruments.

Some Gopis played the dhudhura and panava instruments, while others were devoted to the sounding of the dundubhi (kettle-drum). Some women played the ramabeni, others the gomukha instrument, and yet other cowherd women began to play the drums known as dhalak and kahala.

Singing, laughing, and playing here and there, those Gopis, their eyes filled with tears of emotion and their voices choked with ecstasy, began to dance while singing the glories of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna. Overwhelmed by supreme divine sentiment, they wandered in all directions according to the Lord's desire, absorbed in play.

Raising their voices to the fifth note (Panchama svara) and conversing through musical melodies, they began to enchant the dwellers of the three worlds—heaven, earth, and the lower regions. In other words, everyone at that time became almost unconscious, mesmerized by the sweet music of their well-tuned voices.

Outside of them, the daughters of the gods, adorned with brilliant ornaments, arrived and took their places to witness the Rasa festival. Outside of them stood thousands of noble-hearted daughters of the sages; all were focused with one mind on witnessing the great festival of Radha.

Furthermore, thousands of daughters of the Devas, Gandharvas, Nagas, Kinnaras, Uragas, Rakshasas, Vidyadharas, Apsaras, Yakshas, and Pishachas arrived and were present.

Outside that, hundreds of thousands of other maidens were positioned. Their breasts were heaving, their bodies covered in celestial ornaments, and they wore divine, variegated garments as they joined the Rasa festival.

Their bodies were anointed with celestial fragrances and garlands, and they wore brilliant gem-studded earrings. They were all of the same age, possessed wondrous forms, and were marked with auspicious signs. The cheeks of everyone were illuminated by the swinging, glowing earrings.

They could assume any form at will, wore attire according to their desire, and had their bodies adorned with ornaments favorable to the god of love. All were expert

in the arts of love and were energetic in all amorous play. They traveled according to their will and were overwhelmed by the sentiment of love.

Although these women were of various ages, in the madness of their devotion to Sri Krishna, they all assumed the form of adolescent girls (Kishoris) at that time, filled with beauty equal to ten million Cupids. This means that in the Great Rasa festival, by the hint of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna, no distinction remained between children, youths, middle-aged, or elderly women; all attained a state of budding youth and stood in equal form.

Outside of them stood millions of cowherd boys of equal form and dress. All were of the same age and stood holding staffs in their hands; that is, they were all decorated with identical forms, attire, and ornaments.

They were covered with hundreds of forest garlands, wore excellent loincloths, and were teenagers with the form of Krishna. They were all devoted to playing the flute.

Among these cowherd boys, some held horns, some were expert in playing the flute, some held the vishana (a type of sounding horn), and others were devoted to playing the ramasinga. Some held canes in their hands. With hearts full of great curiosity and attached to play, they continuously sang the secret pastimes of Sri Krishna—that is, His sweet pastimes—mixing them with various excellent notes and keeping perfect rhythm and timing.

Outside of that circle, the herds of restless cows were overwhelmed by the juice of Sri Krishna's love. Offering their hearts to the form of Sri Krishna, they stood motionless like painted figures, incessantly shedding tears of joy from their eyes.

Their entire bodies were covered in horripilation (thrills of joy), appearing like yogis in deep meditation. These Surabhi cows, with their udders overflowing and raining streams of nectar-like milk, served Govinda, who is the very embodiment of supreme bliss.

Thus ends the twentieth chapter, titled "The Sri Rasa-Lila," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Uttar-khanda of the Sri Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twenty-One: Description of the Rasa-Lila

Brahma said: Next, the Father of the Universe, Brahma, said to Angiras: "O son! I shall now describe to you in detail the various groves where Sri Krishna shone in the juice of the Rasa. Listen."

"O wise Angiras! Outside that, in the western direction (Varuni), in a beautiful garden accompanied by cowherd boys, Sri Krishna shines in the evening amidst a grove of Parijata trees, seated upon an incomparable throne made of millions of brilliant gems and rubies."

"O Angiras! He is the embodiment of consciousness beyond the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; the cause of all causes, Govinda. His beautiful dark form is like the Indranila (sapphire) gem, and His head is covered with glossy, dark, curly locks of hair."

"He has eyes like the petals of a beautiful lotus and is devoted to playing the flute. He is the eternal Lord, without beginning or end, the Supreme Person. In other words, He is the non-dual, changeless, taintless one, without any equal or superior."

"The son of Yashoda has an exceedingly tender form, wears yellow garments, and His neck is adorned with a beautiful forest garland. His body is decorated with wondrous gem-encrusted ornaments."

"His glowing body is anointed with celestial fragrances, and He is adorned with enchanting, variegated armlets. The son of Nanda, Sri Krishna, is delighted by the music performed by the groups of cowherd boys."

"The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, at the commencement of the beautiful Rasa-lila, sits in supreme happiness upon His exalted throne, surrounded by the circle of Gopis."

"The names of the Gopis surrounding Him are: Sushila, Bhadrakirti, Tadidogha, Tadidghana, Shashikala, Birama, Sharadabhra, and Pankajalochana."

"O twice-born Angiras! Surrounded by these eight primary women headed by Sushila, Bhagavan Govindachandra, the Lord of the Gopis, shines like the moon (the Lord of the stars) surrounded by the stars."

"In a celestial garden to the North, known as Harichandana, on an enchanting throne encrusted with gems and rubies—indeed, speech fails to describe its beauty."

"There, atop that gem-throne, sits the wielder of the plow, Halayudha (Balarama), accompanied by His consciousness-potency (Chit-shakti). He is the Lord's very dear Anantadeva, non-different from Sri Krishna in both form and quality."

"The glow of Balarama's limbs is like pure, stainless crystal. His eyes are as long as the petals of a blooming red lotus. He wears blue silk garments, and His body is anointed with celestial fragrances."

"Adorned with various ornaments such as earrings, armlets, and bracelets, and wearing divine clothes, garlands, and jewels, His form is enchanting. He is intoxicated from drinking Varuni wine, and His reddened eyes are rolling in intoxication."

"The world is enchanted by the sight of Balarama's beauty. His form is always eager for the juice of love, shining with rows of great gems like diamonds. How beautiful are His eyes, like the petals of an enchanting lotus!"

"His body is covered with wonderful garlands and ointments, decorated with enchanting ornaments and gem-studded jewels. How wondrous is the form of Balarama, possessed of endless beauty that enchants the world! Truly, there is nothing to compare Him to."

"In a most delightful garden in the East, sheltered by celestial trees, stands a glowing gem-studded altar decorated with gold. All the garden regions shine with its brilliance."

"Upon that altar is a supremely brilliant royal throne made of beautiful gems and rubies. There sits the Lord, whose body is embraced by Radha, the giver of satisfaction to all, and who is praised by royal sages like Ambarisha."

"He is dark like a dense, fresh rain cloud. His head is adorned with very tender, dark curls. His two beautiful and restless eyes are as tender as the petals of a blue lotus."

"He is graced with beautiful, well-arched eyebrows, lovely cheeks, a fine nose, a beautiful neck, and a handsome chest. He possesses such an exceedingly beautiful and enchanting form."

"He wears a crown and earrings, and His attire is made beautiful with enchanting Gunja berries. The sound of His sweet anklets enchants the three worlds."

"He has beautiful, long arms and is devoted to playing the flute. His head is adorned with a peacock-feather crown, and His chest shines with a forest garland of the highest beauty."

"Possessing such an enchanting dress and a pure, supremely peaceful form consisting of pure existence (Suddha-sattva), the Lord shines upon the gem-throne in that garden."

"In a beautiful garden in the southern direction, on a throne constructed from a multitude of gems, sits the Supreme Soul—unmanifest, imperishable, beyond the three qualities, the eternal, non-dual Supreme Person. This refers to Narayana."

"His beautiful dark form is endowed with total sweetness and a slight smile on His lotus-face. His form is as beautiful as a blue cloud, and He is adorned with hair that enchants the three worlds."

"He is graced with long, restless eyes like the petals of a blooming hundred-petaled lotus. His head is decorated with a crown that shines with the brilliance of gems; seeing that beauty, the three worlds are mesmerized."

"That Narayana, whose form enchants the three worlds, has four arms, holding the conch, disc, mace, and lotus. He is decorated with ornaments like armlets, bracelets, and rings, and the air is filled with the sound of the bells on His waist-belt."

"His chest is illuminated by the Srivatsa mark and the Kaustubha gem. His neck is adorned with a forest garland reaching down to His knees, and His chest glows with an exceedingly beautiful and very large necklace of pearls."

"He wears an incomparable yellow garment resembling the color of molten gold. Mounted upon the shoulders of Garuda, His form is beautifully adorned with a swinging garland of Malati flowers."

"He is flanked on both sides by Lakshmi and Saraswati. Bhagavan Narayana is the embodiment of Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss (Saccidananda), the source of the juice of perfect bliss and the fullness of all majesty."

"The Supreme Soul Narayana, praised by the lord of sages Narada and others, and surrounded by foremost attendants such as Sunanda and Nanda, is the cause of all causes and the Lord of all effects. He is the one Lord of all the masters of Yoga, whom yogis always remember. That infinite-souled Hrishikesha is present in the southern garden."

Angiras said: Hearing the account that the various forms (vyuha-murtis) of the Lord are present everywhere, the great sage Angiras asked the Grandfather Brahma with great humility.

"O Brahman! For us who are eager to hear, please describe in detail the purifying and holy pastimes of the Lord of Yoga, Sri Krishna, the perfect Supreme Soul, which remove the taints of the three periods of time. He who assumes many forms in His pastimes—that one Supreme Person Sri Krishna and the one Sri Radha, who is the supreme nature (Parama Prakriti) and the foremost of all natures. What was the reason they manifested such an array of divine opulences? Our minds are anxious to know this; therefore, please explain it in detail, as You are omniscient and perfectly know the truth of the Lord."

Brahma said: Hearing this question from the Brahman-sages like Angiras, the Father of the Universe, Hiranyagarbha, the Lord Brahma, explained the cause of the divine opulences.

"O sages! Listen. Although the High-Souled Supreme Person Sri Krishna is without qualities (nirguna), effortless, and untainted—the pure, detached Supreme

Soul—yet in association with Nature (Prakriti), He appears in all these various forms. But He is not tainted by anything. Being completely free from transformations, eternally true, and liberated by nature, all the actions of qualities appear in Sri Krishna just as a crystal appears red when in contact with a red Hibiscus flower. That is, Sri Krishna does nothing; Prakriti performs everything, but people whose eyes are covered by illusion (Maya) think that Sri Krishna is doing everything."

"O Sage! Just as a pure crystal appears red when near a red Hibiscus, Sri Krishna, though without qualities, appears to possess qualities because of the qualities of the nearby Prakriti."

"O Sage! Bhagavan Vasudeva, the delight of the Yadu clan, personally took birth from the womb of Devaki. The primary maidens like Lalita are born from His portion; that they are the most beloved of Sri Krishna is only a conventional saying—pure Prakriti is the sole cause of this."

"As various primary water bodies like rivers and oceans emerge from a single Great Ocean, and from those oceans and rivers, thousands of other streams and rivers come forth."

"O Sage! O wise one! Similarly, through the connection with Prakriti, thousands of worlds and primary beings like Brahma have been produced from Sri Krishna. That is, from the Prakriti which depends on the existence of the Soul comes the Great Principle (Mahat), from Mahat comes Ego (Ahankara), from Ahankara come the three qualities (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas), from which the mind, senses, and gods are created, along with the five elements and the entire world in its individual and collective forms. All this is the work of Prakriti; the Soul, Sri Krishna, is merely the conscious witness."

"To perform various deeds by assuming various bodies, the Lord, following the lead of Maya, creates, preserves, and destroys this universe through Maya."

"The imperishable Bhagavan Vasudeva, the Great Vishnu, joined with His supreme power and assuming various forms, performs diverse sports like magical plays in the company of all those maidens known as Gopis."

"The amorous play of Vasudeva Sri Krishna, who has assumed a human form for His pastimes, began in the Rasa-mandala with Sri Radha, who also assumed a form for His pastimes."

"O Sage! Beholding all the materials and ingredients for the Rasa brought by His followers, the most beloved Sri Krishna, being highly satisfied, spoke these words in a sweet voice to His most beloved Sri Radha.

'Behold these ingredients, O beloved, O beautiful one, which are dear to Me. For the sake of your pleasure, perform everything for this Rasa festival."

O enchanting one! For the completion of this Rasa festival, I now divide My own body into sixteen thousand forms equal to Myself in beauty, quality, age, character, and gait. Thus, an undivided form shall be seen in My manifestations.

Expand your own self into many forms as well, if you consider it appropriate for the sake of the Rasa festival play.'"

Brahma said to the Seven Rishis: "O great sages, listen."

"Hearing these sweet-syllabled words of her beloved, Radha, her lotus face blooming with joy, divided her own body into sixteen thousand identical forms.

They possessed the brilliant beauty of pomegranate flowers, shining with the splendor of a thousand suns. They were covered in all types of ornaments and wore blue garments like water-laden clouds. With gem-studded earrings illuminating their ears and necklaces and armlets adorning them, they had smiling faces and broad hips. Their thick breasts heaved from the impact of their swinging necklaces. All had eyes like blooming lotuses. By expanding their beauty in this way, they assumed endless grace and enchanted all people.

Beholding those beautiful women, who were nearly maddened by the arrows of the god of love and resembled personified forms of Lakshmi, the son of Devaki, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, divided His body into sixteen thousand forms endowed with qualities and beauty equal to His own.

Then the Rasa began with the forms of Radha and the high-souled Sri Krishna, and with the forms of Sri Krishna and the Gopis."

“O sages! With the humming of enchanting anklets, the tinkling of small bells, the sound of bracelets, the rhythm of cymbals, and the sweet sounds of musical instruments, singing, and clapping; with the laughter of the joyous multitude and the sweet-syllabled words of the Gopis and Sri Krishna—the directions, the sky, the earth, heaven, and the seven lower regions including Talatala, the mountains, islands, oceans, and cities—the three worlds were filled at that time.

The sky was illuminated by the brilliance of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha, and by the luster of the most excellent ornaments of gems and rubies.

O Sage! At that time, the cowherd boys, with enchanting flute songs reaching the fifth note, caused the three worlds, including the gods and demons, to fall into a swoon.”

Brahma said to Angiras: "O Sage! As a water-laden cloud shines in the midst of lightning, a form of Sri Krishna shone beautifully between every two deer-eyed Gopis."

“Accompanied by His beloved women, their arms entwined with one another, the Rasa festival proceeded, adorned by the circle of Gopis. It was conducted by Sri Krishna, the master of yogis and the Lord of Yoga, together with those Gopis.”

"O Lord of Sages! The beloved Gopis nearby offered betel to the Sri Krishna standing near them, and Sri Krishna, having chewed the betel given by the beloved nearby, gave it back to His dears. Those cowherd women, their lips reddened by the betel juice, attained supreme beauty between the two Krishnas."

Entering the dance with their beloveds holding their necks, they shone like lightning embraced by a water-laden cloud during the onset of the rainy season.

Embraced by His beloved, the infallible Lord shone like a great Shala tree entwined by a golden vine.

Embraced and dancing repeatedly with His beloveds, Hari kissed those who kissed Him and embraced those who embraced Him. Standing in their midst, He appeared like the moon among the stars.

Sri Krishna, standing between every two Gopis, gave them chewed fragrant betel mixed with camphor, aguru, and nutmeg to their lotus faces.

Sri Krishna, pulling His beloved's hand with His own, bringing her near and loosening the arm-lock, embraced her within His two arms.

He shone in the presence of the Gopis, who were like golden gems, as a sapphire (Indranila) shines near gold.

Brahma said to Angiras: "O child! O Sage! With sweet smiles, the placement of feet, sweet-syllabled words, breasts moving with their gait, and Malati flower garlands falling from their loosened braids; with the slipping of their excellent lower garments and the rhythmic movements of the Rasa, a tumultuous sound arose that shook the earth and reached the sky, O Sage."

Some Gopis were dancing, and some, filled with joy, were singing the secret pastimes of Sri Hari in clear syllables.

Thus ends the twenty-first chapter, titled "The Description of the Rasa Dance," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Conclusion of the Description of the Rasa Festival

Brahma said to the Seven Rishis headed by Marichi: "Desiring to see the assembly of the Rasa and the supremely blissful, infallible Lord sporting with His consciousness-potency Sri Radha, the most generous Vaishnava sages, who had conquered their senses, arrived at the place of the Rasa."

"The sages, who delight in the self, whose desires are fulfilled, who are immersed in supreme bliss, who are free from longing, who have no other support but the Supreme Brahman, whose path is unobstructed, and whose souls are pure—all arrived."

"I (Brahma), Vishnu, Shiva, Lakshmi, Durga, Saraswati, Rati, Kandarpa, Varuna, Kuvera, and Indra with Shachi; Agni with his beloved Svaha; Yama, holding his

staff and mounted on a great buffalo; the Maruts mounted on lions; the Ashvinikumara twins, the Pitrus, the twelve Adityas, the Balakhilya sages, and Marichi; Ananta, Vasuki, Shesha, Mahapadma, Takshaka, Kaliya, and all the serpent kings arrived at the Rasa-mandala in Vrindavan, desiring to see the Rasa-Lila."

"The Pramathas, ghosts, Kushmandas, Dakinis, Putana and other child-slayers, the Yoginis, the Matrikas, the Vidyas (sciences), and the fourteen branches of knowledge; the oceans, rivers, Nagas, lakes, planets, and stars; the six seasons, the four ages, the months, and the years—all the divisions of time arrived there at that time."

"Gods, demons, Gandharvas, Pishachas, Uragas, Rakshasas, Vidyadharas, the personified bodies of water, groups of Charanas and Apsaras; Yakshas, aquatic creatures, Daityas, birds, Kinnaras, humans, and fortunate royal sages; the performers of sacrifices who give abundant dakshina; the Manus and the sons of Manu, shining with their own splendor; Gaya, Marutta, Matanga, Harishchandra, Ambarisha, Raghu, Nahusha, Yayati, the great Shantanu, Dilipa, Sagara, King Bhanu, the powerful Samvarana, Bhagiratha of great fame who increased the Ikshvaku lineage, Ushinara, his son Shibi, King Sveta, and King Dasharatha, the light of the Raghu dynasty."

"These and many other kings of great splendor arrived, dressed in various clothes and ornaments, their bodies anointed with variegated fragrances, mounted on the most excellent vehicles, and wearing incomparable gem-earrings."

"Prahlada, Narada, Dhaumya, Akrura, Sukadeva, Uddhava, Kashyapa, Atri, Pulastya, and the son of Renuka (Parashurama) with his disciples; Vashistha, Jamadagni, Vedavyasa himself, Daksha, Pracheta, Pulaha, Kratu, Maitreya, and Durvasas with sixty thousand disciples and grand-disciples; Bharadwaja, Vishrava, the powerful Vishvamitra, Sumantu the teacher of Atharva Veda, Galava, Garga, Bhrigu, Jaimini, Gautama, the celestial sage Sanatkumara, the high-souled Markandeya, Shunaka, Shuktika, the world-conquering son of Parashara (Vyasa), Chyavana, Brihaspati, Shukracharya, and the noble-minded Vamadeva—all these sages, holders of strict vows, their bodies covered in horripilation out of a longing to see Sri Krishna, arrived in Vrindavan to see Sri Radha, singing the qualities of

Hari in choked voices and with tearful eyes, accompanied by their followers and beloveds, carrying weapons and wearing fine clothes."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O Sage! As a lake in autumn is covered with autumnal lotuses, the Vrindavan region became covered and beautified by the millions of excellent vehicles belonging to these personages."

"The people desiring to see the matchless Rasa beheld the enchanting places, high and low, filled with the fragrance of various blooming flowers like Kumuda and Utpala on all sides."

"They saw the cowherd boys of the same age as Sri Krishna, expert in playing the flute with sweet tones, playing in secluded spots in all directions."

Brahma said to Angiras: "O Angiras! Thereafter, all the people desiring the vision descended from their vehicles, which were as high as mountain peaks, and with joined palms and bowed heads, prostrated like staffs on the earth to Sri Krishna."

"Filled with supreme devotion, their lotus faces became joyful, and the bodies of those foremost gods were covered in thrills of delight."

"O Sage! Having prostrated, all the gods worshipped Sri Krishna with various offerings such as Arghya, incense, lamps, and Madhuparka, and then beheld the boon-giving Sri Krishna with a joyful lotus face, seated upon His excellent throne. The intent is that Sri Krishna is the giver of boons even to the gods who themselves give boons to all."

“He is four-armed, bearing the weapons of the conch, mace, and others. He is adorned with a crown, necklaces, armlets, and earrings. His face is smiling and all-enchanting; He wears yellow garments, and His chest is illuminated by the Kaustubha gem. His form is enchanting and removes all types of delusion.

His splendor is equal to a thousand moons, and His chest is decorated with a garland of forest flowers. His head is adorned with a crown made of priceless rubies and gems, upon which sits a beautiful peacock feather that sways in the wind.

He is devoted to the art of music, filling His excellent flute with the breath of His mouth to produce a multitude of melodies. With His supreme beauty and wondrous dance and song, Sri Krishna-chandra is enchanting everyone.

His two excellent feet, which are served by attendants such as Sunanda and Nanda and which sever the bonds of birth and worldliness, are beautifully adorned. Those feet are worshipped by the foremost of yogis who are dedicated to yoga. With hearts full of great joy and intense devotion, the gods, with voices choked with emotion, began to offer prayers to Hari, the remover of the distress of those who surrender to Him."

The gods said: "O Lord of the Universe! Your two lotus feet are the refuge for us who seek shelter. Your lotus feet are as brilliant as the light of a thousand suns and are beautified by anklets adorned with excellent gems and pearls. O Lord! Those lotus feet are our sole supreme refuge during times of distress."

"O Sri Krishna! We all bow to Your lotus feet. It is only by attaining Your grace that we have gained the sovereignty of the celestial realm and that Brahma has attained his own position known as Satya-loka."

"Salutations to the protector of the cowherds; salutations to the Lord of the cowherds. Salutations again and again to Him whose feet are worshipped by the cowherds and who is Himself a cowherd."

"O Govinda! O Lord of the beloved Gopis! O slayer of the demons who are the enemies of the gods! O bee to the lotus-like faces and lotus-like hearts of the Gopis! O destroyer of the demon Kamsa! O You who are difficult to attain even for the immortals! We bow to You."

"Salutations to You who are self-born; salutations to the Lord of the self-born Brahma. Salutations to You who are subtle, yet possess a gross form, and who are the subtlest of the subtle."

"Salutations to You who are worshipped through subtle rituals and who are the subtlest of the subtle. Salutations to the Lord of thought, the gem of thought (Chintamani), who is to be meditated upon and whose form is inconceivable."

"O Krishna! You are the personification of qualities and are to be meditated upon by those who possess good qualities, yet You are without qualities (nirguna) and inconceivable. As the Soul, You are the embodiment of the inconceivable abode. Though without qualities, You are the most meditated upon among meditatable objects. You are the abode of inconceivable qualities. You are pure in Your white form, the wearer of a pure white face, and exceedingly famous. We bow to You."

"O Krishna! You are the Soul without qualities, yet You are not without qualities; that is, You are both finite and infinite. You are pure and radiant; You are the embodiment of strength, yet You are without strength. You are the soul of qualities, worshipped for Your qualities, yet You are unattainable by qualities and are beyond them. We bow to You."

"O Krishna! Though beyond qualities, You appear with qualities and are the foremost among those with qualities; You are also without qualities. Therefore, You are both with qualities (saguna) and without qualities (nirguna). You are worshipped by the Vedas and are beyond the Vedas. You are the wielder of the Vedas in Your hands—that is, You are the four-armed holder of Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. We bow to You."

"O Krishna! You are unattainable even by the Vedas, Vedanta, and the branches of the Vedas. You are the Lord in the form of Brahma. You are in the form of Shiva, yet You are the one worshipped by Shiva. You are the giver of all auspiciousness. Salutations to You again and again."

"O Krishna! You are both auspicious and inauspicious, as You are both dual and non-dual. You are in the form of a child, a youth, and even an old man. You are everything and everything is in You. You are all forms. You are the fulfiller of all desires and the giver of all. We bow to You."

"O Lord of all! You are beyond all, having surpassed everyone. You are worshipped by all in every way. You have a blooming lotus-face and long, blooming lotus-eyes. Salutations to You again and again."

"O Krishna! You have lotus-like feet and hands like blooming lotuses. You are the Supreme Soul in both manifest and unmanifest forms—that is, You are both the

revealed and the unrevealed. Therefore, You are all forms, manifest and unmanifest. We bow to You."

"O Krishna! You possess a multitude of clearly manifest qualities, yet as the Soul, You are the unmanifest abode. That is, You are the sole refuge of the world in both gross and subtle forms. We bow to You."

Brahma said to the Seven Rishis: "O son! All the gods, headed by me, having beheld the Supreme Soul Govinda seated upon an excellent throne made of gems and rubies, His body embraced by Sri Radha who stood on His left, and His lotus-face slightly smiling, offered prayers with total devotion."

"O sages! I then performed the ritual bath (Abhisheka) of the god of gods, the mighty-armed Sri Krishna, the beloved of Rama (Radha), using the holy waters of the celestial Mandakini, the milk of the excellent Surabhi cows, and the waters of the seven oceans, all sanctified by mantras. I bestowed upon Him the matchless name 'Govinda' and presented Him with a priceless necklace of gems."

The god of gods, Bhava (Shiva), joyfully gave Him a pair of bracelets made of gems crafted by the king of serpents, Vasuki. Vishnu, the Lord of Svetadvipa, gave Sri Krishna a beautiful garland of stainless, fresh lotus flowers.

Hutashana (Agni) gave Sri Krishna two divine, pure yellow garments cleansed by fire. Varuna gave Him an incomparable white umbrella that produces gold.

The noble Lord of serpents, Anantadeva, gave Him an excellent necklace made of endless varieties of gems.

The Lord of the waters, the Ocean, out of his pleasure for Sri Hari, gave Him ornaments for the neck and bracelets made of gems. The thousand-eyed King of the gods, Indra, gave Sri Krishna the Vaijayanti garland.

Himalaya, the foremost among mountains, gave Sri Krishna a pair of sweet-sounding anklets. The regulator of beings, Dharmaraja Yama, gave Him various ornaments such as neck jewelry.

Mahasena (Kartikeya), the son of Parvati, gave Him a waist-chain (kanchi) made of various gems that produced a sweet humming sound. The Lord of the Guhyakas, Kuvera, gave Sri Krishna gem-studded rings for all His fingers.

Upendra Sri Krishna, the younger brother of Indra, gave Radha a tilaka of imperishable vermilion. O Lord of Sages! Sachi Devi gave Radha ornaments for her hair—clusters of flowers made of gems—and a pair of earrings made of great jewels crafted by Vishvakarma, as well as an iron bangle for her left wrist, signifying her status as an unwidowed wife (Aihiratva).

O Sage! Kandarpa (the god of love) gave Sri Krishna, who has assumed the universal form (Vishvarupa), a crown for His head that was as brilliant as ten million suns.

Lakshmi (Kamala) joyfully decorated the cheeks of Radha with dots of Harichandana. Arundhati, the foremost of chaste women, gave her a tilaka of red sandalwood and collyrium for her eyes.

Rati, the wife of Kandarpa, with great respect, gave Radha very expensive and variegated clothes and ornaments.

Having prostrated, the gods said: "O Lord! We now desire to return to our own abodes. O Master! O refuge of our souls! Please be pleased to grant us permission."

Brahma said to the saptarishis headed by Angiras: "O children! Having received permission, the gods, who are the subduers of enemies, returned to where they had come from. The noble-souled sages, Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Pannagas all departed from the Vrindavan forest for their respective homes."

"Whoever hears or reads this pure account of the Soul-knowing Sri Krishna, of Sri Radha, and of the Rasa-Lila, or causes others to hear or read it with devotion and a steady mind, shall obtain completely auspicious results. That is, a seeker of Dharma shall obtain Dharma, a seeker of wealth shall obtain wealth, a seeker of fame shall obtain fame, and a seeker of knowledge shall obtain knowledge. Furthermore, a person without worldly desires shall obtain liberation (Moksha),

which is the attainment of Sayujya-mukti (union) with Sri Krishna, the wielder of the Sharnga bow."

Thus ends the twenty-second chapter, titled "The Description of the Rasa Festival," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Sri Brahmanda Mahapurana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twenty-Three: The Conversation Between Sri Krishna and Chandravali

Angiras said: O Brahman! All these wonderful deeds of Sri Krishna, who performs miraculous acts, and of Sri Radha, are supreme, purifying, and the destroyers of sin.

O best among the knowers of Brahman! You are the foremost of all who know the Absolute. By drinking the nectar of Sri Krishna's pastimes as it flows from your lotus-mouth, the desire to hear more has increased in our hearts with great faith. Therefore, please graciously tell us the other characters and deeds of the supremely pure Sri Krishna, which are the cause of purification.

O Brahman! What did Sri Krishna and the supreme power Sri Radha do next? Please reveal to us how the high-souled Supreme Soul Sri Krishna, along with the blissful Sri Radha, who is the embodiment of Brahman, expanded their pastimes in Vrindavan through wondrous acts.

Brahma said: After hearing this question, the Grandfather spoke to Angiras.

Description of Chandravali

O twice-born! By the curse of Sri Radha, the best of all rivers, the celestial Ganga, took birth in the circle of Vraja as a Gopi named Chandravali. There was no other young woman on earth whose beauty equaled that of Chandravali.

That Gopi Chandravali was not of a dark complexion, yet she was called Shyama. She possessed beautiful hair and incomparably high, full breasts. She walked like a

maddened elephant, and her gentle gait was like that of a swan. She was tender-bodied, in the full bloom of youth, and spoke most sweetly.

O Sage! Brahma said to Angiras: That Chandravali had large, elongated eyes like those of a deer or lotus petals, slightly reddish at the corners. Her lips were as red as the Bimba fruit, her waist was as slender as a lion's, and she had full hips and beautiful teeth like pomegranate seeds. That noble-minded, beautiful woman Chandravali enchanted the minds of young men with the sweetness of her form.

One day, on the banks of the Yamuna, Sri Hari, surrounded by cowherd boys, was tending the cows and joyfully sounded His flute with a sweet tone. Hearing that sound, Chandravali's eyes overflowed with tears of love. Overwhelmed by her awakened emotions, she approached Sri Krishna, prostrated herself, and with a heavy heart, submitted these words.

O sages! Chandravali spoke to her beloved Krishna with humble and affectionate words.

Chandravali said: "O Krishna! To You, whose movements are unperceivable and whose deeds are beyond comprehension, I bow. O Lord! Why do You abandon me, a helpless, innocent, and miserable girl, without reason?"

"Save me from the ocean of desire! Salutations again and again to Your feet. O God! O Giver of boons! I have no other refuge; I am eternally surrendered to You. O Lord! You are the sole protector of helpless ones like me. Therefore, I bow to You."

Brahma said: Next, Brahma explained further to Angiras. Hearing the distressed words of Chandravali, the son of Devaki, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, affectionately embraced that best of rivers and comforted her with these reassuring words.

Sri Krishna said: (with deep love) "O tender-limbed one! O sinless Chandravali of faultless form! Do not weep anymore. I have understood all the feelings of your heart. O fair-faced one! Knowing everything, I have appeared as indifferent as a cruel person because, fearing a quarrel, I could not suddenly choose you for the rites of love."

"O beautiful one! Remember the past. You are no ordinary Gopi; you are the best of rivers, Ganga. O Ganga! Due to a previous curse regarding your authority, you have now taken birth in a cowherd's house in the circle of Gokula and are known as Chandravali. I shall fulfill the desire of your mind; do not be distressed anymore."

"O beautiful one of enchanting form! Tonight, I shall sound my excellent flute and come to my enchanting bower. You too, following that signal, shall come to that bower-forest."

"O Chandravali! I shall go to a secluded place with you, but I am entirely afraid that Sri Radha might come to know of this matter, even though I am the Soul of all."

Brahma said: Having drunk the nectar of the beloved Sri Krishna's words through her ears, the lotus-face of the Gopi Chandravali immediately bloomed with joy. Hearing these words indicating His favor, Chandravali prostrated to that best of gods and, with a heart full of supreme joy, returned to her home while contemplating His pastimes and deeds.

Seeing her approaching from a distance, her face blooming like a lotus and laughing with joy, her companions of the same age called out to her from their houses.

"O dear friend! O you whose face is a blooming lotus! O Chandravali! For what reason do you return today so filled with joy? Tell us, what great jewel have you obtained, and from whom or where did you get it just now?"

"O faultless one! O you with beautiful eyebrows! O you with full hips and breasts! We have never seen you as delighted as you are now. Tell us, what is the cause of this?"

"O daughter of a cowherd! O Chandravali! You always used to lament and criticize yourself in front of us, saying: 'Fie on my birth! Fie on this body which is a burden to the earth!', meaning that this body served no purpose for happiness and that the Creator had made you only for the forest of sorrow."

"O friend Chandravali! You always criticized yourself, saying: 'Fie on me! I live in this world as an unmarried woman, shunned by society, holding this priceless youth in vain.' You even cursed your father and mother for raising you for no purpose."

"You would say: 'Fie on my beauty, fie on my wealth, fie on my qualities and my status!' O friend! Constantly expressing such regret, you always remained with a faded face. Tell us, why do you return home today so joyful?"

"O friend! Even if it is a very deep secret, tell us the reason for your joy as your friends."

Brahma said: “O Sage! Being thus questioned by her friends, Chandravali, filled with joy, related to her companions all the virtuous words and things that had transpired with Krishna on the banks of the Yamuna, according to her memory.

Upon hearing the entire account of the meeting with Krishna, which indicated her happiness, all those women laughed with great joy. Then, some friends began to weave garlands of various fragrant flowers with the desire to place them around Sri Krishna’s neck, and some friends began to decorate Chandravali with enchanting and beautiful attire.”

“The grove appeared supremely beautiful and auspicious. Bees hummed on all sides among the blossoms, and clusters of flowers swayed gently, stirred by a soft and fragrant breeze. The forest-bower resounded with the melodious murmur of Yamunā’s rippling waters and was adorned with charming sub-groves and wooded bowers. It shone with exceptional beauty and was exceedingly secluded. This place was a transcendental abode, difficult of attainment even for yogis—serene, supremely peaceful, and delightfully cooled by cows and cowherds.

Chandravali, ever-chaste, waited in that grove for the arrival of her beloved Krishna. As she looked about in all directions, she listened intently. Whenever she heard the rustling of dry leaves stirred by the wind, she became startled and imagined that Adhokṣaja, Sri Krishna, was approaching.

Restlessly rising from her couch, Chandravali hurried along the path to welcome Him. After going some distance and failing to see Him, she returned again, her heart filled with agitation, and sat back down upon her couch within the bower.

Then Chandravali reflected within herself - 'Krishna will certainly come to my grove. Otherwise, moved by compassion, He would send some consoling message. The Supreme Lord can never speak falsely.'

Knowing her anxious state, Krishna reflected upon her condition - 'trusting My words, Chandravali is surely awaiting Me.'

Having thus decided, and wishing to bestow special grace upon her, Krishna proceeded toward her secluded grove. As Krishna entered the secret forest, He became fearful that the sound of His anklebells might betray His presence. Intending to prevent this, He sought to remove them. When He raised His hand toward His feet to loosen the anklebells, at that moment, the anklebells themselves, with great humility, addressed Krishna."

The anklebells said: "O Lord, we do not desire liberation, although You are the giver of liberation. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, the gods, and even the demons seek refuge at Your lotus feet. We too have surrendered ourselves there and delight only in singing Your glories."

"Immersed in supreme bliss, our very being dissolves therein. Your lotus feet are sought even by the greatest yogic lords. O Treasure of Beauty, through the praise of Your qualities, our bodies and minds drown in joy."

"O Master, O Refuge of the fallen, we have heard from Narada that Your lotus feet are extremely rare to attain. Therefore, having surrendered ourselves, do not abandon us."

Brahmā said: Thus were these words spoken by the anklebells, uttered with tender, gentle tones. Having first heard the humble and submissive words spoken in this manner by the pair of anklebells, Krishna, with a naturally gentle face and with exceedingly soft, sweet, youthful speech, spoke in a way that delighted them. By these words He indicated that the anklebells had formerly been nāgas who,

through the fruit of many spiritual practices, had attained the pleasure of Krishna and had become His attendants. Having thus become attached to His lotus feet, they remained there constantly. For this reason, these nāgas were known as Nāga-mañjīras, the anklebells of Śrī Krishna.

Śrī Krishna said: (reassuringly) "O anklebells, O noble ones, I shall not abandon you. Rather, I shall grant you the highest and most excellent position. For the present, I shall keep you for a short time upon My waist alone. Thereafter, you shall once again attain your place upon My lotus feet."

Brahmā said: O Muni, thus addressed by Sri Krishna of immeasurable effulgence, the pair of nāgas—that is, the anklebells—became overwhelmed with devotion. Filled with emotion, they offered folded hands and then spoke to Sri Krishna.

The Nāga-mañjīras said: "O Lord, be pleased with us. O protector of those who take refuge, we do not desire residence upon Your waist. Knowing ourselves to be surrendered souls, please grant us a place near Your lotus feet. Thus we bow down to You."

Sri Krishna said: (pleased) "O anklebells, remain indeed at My lotus feet. I shall not remove you from there. However, according to My instruction, remain silent for a short time. For when I enter the secret forest grove, if you produce sound, all will become aware of My presence." Saying this, He bound them firmly again at His feet.

In accordance with the Lord's words, the anklebells remained silent and stayed near His lotus feet. Thereafter, Krishna entered the grove without fear. Upon reaching Chandravali, He suddenly embraced her by drawing her close with both hands and kissed her lotus-like face.

At that moment, Chandravali, immersed in an ocean of supreme joy, experienced auspicious signs throughout her body. Just as a golden creeper entwined around a tall sāla tree appears extraordinarily beautiful, in the same manner Chandravali, like a radiant golden vine, drew Krishna close with her long arms and embraced her beloved who had arrived.

Thereafter, Chandravali, her heart overflowing with delight, placed upon Krishna's chest a garland of forest flowers strung upon a delicate thread. She then offered Him a betel preparation fragrant with camphor and aloe, which reddened His lips.

Just as a learned young man becomes fully satisfied upon approaching a great scholar, so Chandravali's entire being became filled with joy upon Krishna's arrival. That bliss was such that it could not be contained within her body alone.

Next, Chandravali washed the supremely pleasing lotus feet of Krishna with fragrant, excellent water. With a joyful heart she sang His glories, offered prostrated obeisance with all eight limbs, praised Him, and began to dance.

Thereafter, mutual kissing, embracing, nail-marks, and tooth-marks began between the two. An intense and fierce amorous battle commenced.

A terrifyingly intense amorous battle took place between the two. Throughout the night, they struck each other with arrows of desire according to their own wills.

Brahma said: There was no respite for those two lions of love, Sri Krishna and Chandravali. Both were tirelessly engaged in union; Malati flower garlands were crushed and torn from their chests, and their garments slipped from their waists.

The braids of both became loosened, and their hair fell scattered; their lips, once reddened by betel juice, grew pale. Both were exhausted, and due to the exertion of love, their breathing became heavy and frequent like that of angry serpents.

As Sri Krishna was about to leave after the amorous play, Chandravali reached out with her vine-like arms from behind, bound Him by His back, and laughing, said, "O thief of pleasure! Having been defeated in the battle of love, where are you fleeing now? O excellent Beloved! Having made me drink the nectar of Your lips, where will You go now, abandoning me?"

Chandravali said: "O Beloved! I am a helpless, poor, and innocent girl who has sought Your presence. Having stolen my heart and abandoned me, where will You go to shine with someone else?"

Out of love, she cried out, "Will You truly go?" and began to weep in a distressed state, reciting the qualities of her beloved out of fear of the coming separation.

Seeing her intense longing, Sri Krishna returned to her side, embraced His beloved from behind, and being kissed and embraced by her, He kissed and embraced her in return.

Brahma said: O son! Through hundreds of such loving gestures, the fire of desire between Sri Krishna and Chandravali was fueled, just as a fire blazes higher when fed with clarified butter.

Exhausted by the battle of love, the bodies of both Sri Krishna and Chandravali were bathed in beads of perspiration. They displayed various expressions of love: the bond of love, the offering of love, the discipline of love, the words of love, the quarrel of love, weeping, moving, standing still, the holding of breath, and the act of pleasing.

When Chandravali sang, Sri Krishna followed her singing; when Sri Krishna sang, Chandravali followed His singing. Wherever Sri Krishna went, Chandravali followed Him there; and wherever Chandravali went, Sri Krishna followed her.

Whatever Chandravali spoke, Sri Krishna spoke in return; and after Sri Krishna spoke, Chandravali responded. Seeing Chandravali dance, Sri Krishna danced; and seeing Sri Krishna dance, Chandravali danced after Him.

When Sri Krishna laughed, Chandravali laughed; and seeing Chandravali laugh, Sri Krishna laughed as well. Following Sri Krishna’s weeping out of the intensity of love, Chandravali wept; and following Chandravali’s weeping, Sri Krishna wept in return.

In this way, their bodies remained immersed in the ocean of desire on the banks of the Yamuna, yet the fire of the arrows of desire did not subside. Just as a fire fed with clarified butter blazes more intensely, the fire of their desire increased moment by moment.

Thus ends the twenty-third chapter, titled "The Meeting with Chandravali," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Sri Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twenty-Four: Description of the Indomitable Pride of Sri Radhika

Brahma said: "O Angiras! While Krishna spent the night in amorous play with Chandravali, listen now to the state in which Sri Radha, the delight of the kunjas, spent the night."

"O Sage! The daughter of Vrishabhanu, with her beautiful waist, remained in the vine-bower surrounded by hundreds of companions, waiting anxiously for the arrival of Sri Krishna according to the signal given by Him."

"O Sage! Radha sang in a sweet voice with her companions in the bower, but due to the pangs of separation from her beloved Sri Krishna, a single watch of the night felt to her like an entire year."

"O Angiras! Then the fire of her separation from Krishna began to burn fiercely. To pacify the agony of that indomitable fire of separation, her companions brought many lotus leaves and flowers from the lake and prepared a bed for her to rest upon."

Brahma said: "O Sage! Those lotuses withered the very moment they touched the body of Sri Radhika due to the intense fire of her separation."

"O twice-born Angiras! Thereafter, the companions applied cool, fragrant sandalwood paste to her limbs to soothe the heat, but upon touching the body of Radha, which was parched by separation, that sandalwood paste dried up in an instant."

"Beholding her own life becoming so dry and desolate, the beautiful Radha began to look in all ten directions repeatedly and lamented, sighing deeply."

"Radha began to act like one truly maddened by the heat of separation from Sri Krishna. For a moment she would lie on the ground, for a moment she would submerge herself in water; finding no peace even on the soft lotus bed, she would apply fragrant substances to her body, and finally, she applied mud to her limbs to ward off the sting of desire."

"Sometimes she would sigh deeply, sometimes she would stand up; sometimes she would wander here and there, sometimes she would laugh, and sometimes she

would weep or lament. Occasionally, her body would tremble and she would sit down, covered in dust like one insane, looking all around her. Due to the separation from Krishna, Radha's state became like that of a madwoman."

"Sometimes, out of the agony of separation, she would lament to Sri Krishna, saying: 'O Beloved! I am helpless; where are You, having cast me into the ocean of sorrow? O Lord! Save my life in this moment of crisis by showing me Your beautiful nose, Your eyebrows, Your dark curly hair, and Your lotus face graced with a slight smile!'"

"O Lord! O Beloved! O All-pervading One! Without You, I am unable to sustain my life for even a moment. I am helpless and You are my Master; I am entirely dependent on You."

"O Sri Krishna! Why have You abandoned me? I am helpless, constantly devoted to meditating upon You, fallen into the ocean of grief, lamenting, innocent, and without any other refuge. For there is no protector other than You. O Lord! Why did You leave me?"

"Then, in the madness of separation, she mistakenly thought that Sri Krishna had arrived in the bower. Believing this, she embraced a nearby companion and, mistaking her for the Dark Lord, began to kiss her face repeatedly."

"Then, imagining Sri Krishna to be near, she began to rebuke Him with various words of reproach: 'O King of Rasa! If You do not come to me now, then remember my girdle-bind, my sharp words, and the previous strikes of my vine-like arms!'"

"O Lord! O Lover of the poor! O Lotus-eyed One! O Protector of those who seek refuge! Whatever strikes I gave to Your body in the madness of love, and whatever harsh words of reproach I spoke, were my offenses. Please forgive all those offenses of mine now."

"While she was thus lamenting in her distress, she heard the rustle of dry leaves moved by the wind. Thinking that her beloved was arriving, she stood up with joined palms to welcome Him."

"At that time, she saw the moon rising in the East, dispelling the darkness of the night with its camphor-white brilliance along with the stars. In her state of extreme heat from separation, she bowed to the moon and said:"

"O Moon! O Cold-rayed One! I bow to you. I am already nearly dead from separation from Krishna; do not burn me further with your rays that are like the flames of a blazing fire. Why do you kill me without cause?"

"If you persist in burning me, then through my penance I shall worship Sri Hari, the punisher of the wicked, and assuming the form of Rahu, I shall surely punish you."

"O Krishna (Kama)! I bow to You. Do not strike me further with Your arrows. I am an innocent, weak girl; what will You gain by killing me?"

Radhika, overwhelmed with the madness of separation, bowed to Kandarpa (the god of love) with prayers and then addressed him with words of reproach: "O Mara! O Kandarpa! I am extremely distressed by separation from Krishna. Do not pierce my vital parts further with your sharp arrows. I am an innocent, weak girl; what opulence will you gain by destroying me?"

"O Kandarpa! Since you are torturing me, an innocent person, even though I have sought your refuge, you are utterly heartless and of an extremely wicked nature. Therefore, to subdue you, I shall assume the form of the fire from Mahadeva's third eye and undoubtedly reduce you to ashes instantly."

Then Radha said to her companions: "O friends! The fragrant substances and sandalwood paste you are applying to my body to extinguish the fire of separation, and the lotus-leaf bed you are having me lie upon—I cannot bear them. Instead of pacifying the heat, they feel more agonizing than the sharpest poison."

In this manner, Radha, the daughter of the lord of cowherds Vrishabhanu, devoted to the meditation of her beloved, remained extremely distressed by the separation from Krishna, existing like the living dead until, at the end of the night at dawn, she saw Sri Krishna arriving at the door of the grove.

Brahma said: The Father of the Universe described the condition of Sri Krishna at that time to Angiras.

As morning came, his eyes were reddened; he repeatedly rubbed his eyes due to the night's vigil. He arrived slowly at Radha's bower out of fear, and as if he had forgotten the previous signal, he spoke to Radha with a slight smile.

Sri Krishna said: (humbly) "O Beloved! Why are you so distressed? Why has your lotus-face withered? O one with thighs like plantain trees! Tell me, why are you sighing so deeply and warmly?"

Brahma said: Hearing these words from Sri Krishna's mouth, her eyes became reddened with rage. She observed Sri Krishna's chest and eyes, the smeared tilaka, the bitten cheeks, the displaced crest-jewel, his entire body covered in perspiration, his lips darkened by the collyrium from another woman's eyes, the withered garland, and his disordered clothing (having abandoned his own and wearing a woman's garment). Seeing him exhausted from the battle of love, she spoke to her companion Ananga Manjari, who stood before her as a messenger. "O friend! Cast this lecher out of my bower immediately."

"O friend! I do not wish to look upon his face. Therefore, I tell you: take this deceitful, ungrateful, foolish, fickle, and small-minded person, who has abandoned virtue, away from my presence at once by my command."

"I cannot bear to look upon this lecher in front of me. Let him go to that same dear beloved in whose company he spent the night."

"O friend! If this rogue remains before me for even another moment, I swear that as night turns to day, I shall give up my life by entering water, by hanging, or by consuming fierce poison."

Brahma said: Hearing these unpleasant words of his beloved, Hari forcibly held her garment in an attempt to atone for his offense and to please Sri Radha.

Seeing the Supreme Soul, the infallible Lord, holding her upper garment, Radha, her eyes flooded with falling tears, became filled with great rage and immediately snatched her garment back from his hand.

After she released her hand, Sri Krishna again plotted to remove her pride. To generate joy in her, he extended his arms and suddenly embraced her, repeatedly kissing the lotus-face of the all-beautiful Sri Radha.

At that, Radha did not become joyful; instead, shaking her lotus-face as a sign of irritation, she began to repel Sri Krishna in great anger, not showing her usual pleasing nature.

Brahma said: O son Angiras! Hearing these harsh words from his beloved and being repelled by her, Sri Krishna—though defeated by Sri Radha—used his own upper cloth to wipe the lotus-face and the tear-filled eyes of the daughter of Vrishabhanu. He then spoke these words with great humility and submission.

Sri Krishna said: (humbly) "O Beloved! My offense should be forgiven by you. I am entirely under your control, as my very life, my mind, my intellect, and all my happiness are subordinate to you. Therefore, abandon your anger toward me, who am like your servant."

"O timid one! O Beloved! I am dearer than the dear to you, and I am a servant who constantly seeks your pleasure, standing now dejected by your side. O Beloved! O one of enchanting form! If you abandon me, I shall certainly give up this miserable life which is dependent on you; there is no doubt."

Brahma said: O son! Hearing such humble words from her beloved, Radha kept her gaze fixed downward on the ground. Still filled with great anger, she repeatedly said to the companions standing nearby: "O companions! What are you still looking at? Take this lecher out of my grove."

"He is cruel, of base conduct, a fool who thinks himself a scholar. He is ignorant of love and ill-behaved. If he is not removed, I shall give up this body right here."

Sri Krishna said: Observing Sri Radha as one whose pride was indomitable, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, bowing in humility, spoke these words of prayer to seek forgiveness for his offense.

"O one with thighs like plantain trees! I am very ill-behaved but am eternally your subordinate. Therefore, forgive my offense. O Beloved! The virtuous are always

forgiving toward offenders. O forgiving one! O one of virtuous nature! Today, my offense must be forgiven by you."

Brahma said: Brahma, describing the manner in which Krishna pacified the pride, said to the great sages.

O son Angiras! Having spoken thus, Hari, of immense prowess, suddenly grasped her two feet. With his own lotus-hands, which are as red as copper, he began to propitiate her by holding the lotus-feet of Sri Radha, which resemble blooming red water-lilies.

At that, the daughter of the king of cowherds, her body filled with intense rage, pushed Sri Krishna away and went inside the bower-house to lie down on the floor again.

He fell to the surface of the earth, repelled by his beloved. O Sage! That Krishna, by accumulating the dust of whose lotus-feet the Father of the Universe, Brahma, became the creator of this world, today fell to the ground after being struck and pushed away by the feet of Radha.

Mahadeva, Shankara, the great yogi, exists by constantly remembering the pair of Sri Krishna's feet, which are like blooming red lotuses. That Govinda, the beginningless source and the worshipable Lord of all, fell helpless to the ground after being rejected by his beloved Sri Radha.

His entire body covered in dust, sighing and lamenting repeatedly, he suddenly went to the house of the messenger Vrinda to think of a way to pacify his beloved.

Seeing the Lord, the unborn Govinda, approaching from a distance with a withered lotus-face, the auspicious messenger of Krishna, Vrinda, noticed his beautiful grace had turned pale.

O Sage! Seeing the Lord in such a state—covered in dust, thin, dejected, and eyes full of tears—Vrinda considered herself completely blessed.

Rising quickly, the messenger prostrated to Sri Krishna with devotion and worshipped him with great respect. Her thought was: "I am very poor and fallen; to make me blessed, the Lord of the poor has graciously come to my presence."

Vrinda said: (respectfully) "Krishna! Krishna! O mighty-armed one! I know You as the Supreme Lord. You are the eternal Inner Soul of all gods and humans."

With great joy, the messenger addressed him as "Krishna, Krishna" repeatedly and said: "O mighty-armed one! You are the Supreme Lord who dwells within all, the knower of all hearts. I know You; Your arrival is only to purify this subordinate."

"You are the worshipable, the worshipper, the worship, and the ingredients of worship. You are the meditator, the meditation, the object of meditation, and are the greatest object of meditation."

"O Govinda, Lord of the helpless! You are all-pervading, famous as the doer, the deed, and the action. There is nothing in the world other than You. You are the worship and the materials for worship. You are the form of meditation, the one who meditates, and the deity to be meditated upon. Your feet are the meditation of all, for You are greater than any object of meditation."

"You are the one to be praised, the praise, the one who causes the praise, and You are higher than all that is high - the greatest object of praise, O Hari! You are the sacrificial offering, the priest, the one who causes the sacrifice, the giver of the offering, and You are the offering itself, O Hari."

“You are the embodiment of the sacrificial fire and also the performer of sacrifice; therefore You alone exist as sacrifice in its fivefold form. O Master, if You are pleased to grant me a boon, then grant me this supreme blessing: may firm and unwavering devotion always remain established at Your lotus feet. O Lord, secondly, may I eternally remain as the servant of the servant of Your servants, and may I never turn away from Your service.”

Brahma said: Hearing these words of praise spoken by Vrinda, Govinda—who is without beginning and without end—became pleased and spoke to her.

Sri Krishna said: O noble one, having been thus praised by you, I smile and say to you: ask for any boon that your heart desires.

Vrinda said: O beloved Govinda, lotus-eyed Lord, what greater boon could there be than this? By the dust of Your lotus feet my home has been purified. My

lineage, my wealth, my body, my speech, my actions, and my mind—everything has been sanctified. O Lord, when You Yourself are pleased, what need is there for any other boon, even from the giver of blessings to the three worlds? Still, if You insist on granting me a boon, then let this alone be granted: may unbroken devotion always remain fixed at Your charming lotus feet.

Brahmā said: Thus Vrinda spoke to Śrī Krishna with words filled with love and devotion. And what Śrī Krishna then spoke to her, that the father of the worlds, Brahmā, narrates to Aṅgirā.

Śrī Krishna said: O Vrinda, by My command go now, O auspicious one, to the presence of Śrī Rādhā. By word, by mind, and by deed, strive fully so that She may be pleased with Me. O messenger, if, having been entrusted with this task by Me, you do not swiftly accomplish it and do not succeed in pleasing Śrī Rādhā, then know this: I shall not delay even a moment to give up My very life before you.

Brahma said: Bearing the command of her Lord upon her head, Vrinda departed at once and swiftly went to the presence of Śrī Rādhā in order to bring about Her appeasement. Seeing the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu standing amidst the circle of sakhīs, Vrinda addressed Her with speech that was inwardly firm yet outwardly gentle, sweet to hear, nectar-like, and soothing.

Vrinda said: O princess, O Rādhā, have You become bewildered by pride and lost proper discernment? Look at Your beauty, Your grace, and Your youth—things whose beloved and natural fulfillment is Śrī Krishna—and yet You wish to abandon Him? Is pride truly something more precious to You than Krishna? How can it be that You are willing to renounce that auspicious jewel resting at Your breast?

O bewildered one, just as a person who consumes poison mixed with food dies even while conscious, so too, O proud one, by abandoning your beloved Śrī Krishna—who is dearer than life itself—are you not embracing poison in the guise of nectar? Shame upon such conduct.

O small-minded one, do you not understand that because of this pride, once deprived of Krishna, you will wander for a long time, lamenting and weeping from place to place? O boastful one, there is no enemy in this world equal to pride. See

how even the great king Kārtavīryarjuna, intoxicated with arrogance, perished along with his attendants, friends, relatives, and armies, destroyed by Paraśurāma, the son of Renukā. Likewise, even Rāvaṇa, conqueror of the three worlds, driven by pride, was reduced to ashes along with his forces and vehicles by Rāma, the son of Kauśalyā. O daughter of the cowherds, O Rādhe, acting in this way is not good.

Similarly, if you abandon Krishna because of this pride, you will suffer torment for a long time. O friend, Krishna is never separate from you. Does a bee intoxicated by the nectar of a fully blossomed lotus ever consent to taste the sap of a withered stalk? How could such a thing ever occur?

Even now, your beloved Hari, Krishna, sits upon the ground, scratching the earth with his fingernails. His body is covered with dust, bent low with sorrow, and streams of tears constantly fall from his eyes. Seeing the condition of your life's beloved, how can you remain unmoved by sorrow?

We, your friends, have become weak from fasting, our eyes swollen from constant weeping and sleepless nights. O pure-smiling one, why do you cause sorrow to your companions and distress to yourself for the sake of this futile pride? Therefore, even now, abandon this pride that brings only ruin.

Rādhā said: O friend, clever-tongued Vrinda, why do you still utter that inauspicious and harsh name "Krishna" in my presence? Do not say it—do not say it again. If anyone dearer to me than life itself dares to speak that wicked man's name before me, I shall surely regard them as an enemy.

If you truly wish to please me, then abandon all speech connected with Krishna, for I have no desire to hear his name. If anyone again utters "Krishna" in my presence, know this for certain: I shall immediately give up my life before them. Therefore, leave my presence at once.

Vrinda said: O Rādhe, O bee among women, have you become so deluded by pride that you have forgotten everything? Compassion, forgiveness, generosity, patience, and all exalted virtues eternally reside in Śrī Krishna, the transcendental Lord. What sorrow could exist in connection with him? And yet, abandoning Krishna, you seek happiness—tell me, is there anyone else in this world who can grant happiness without Krishna?

Brahmā said: Thus, when Rādhā remained firmly established in her pride, Vrinda—the well-wishing messenger—seeing her words rendered fruitless, rebuked her according to proper decorum. Her eyes reddened with great anger, and after chastising Rādhā in various ways, she swiftly departed from there and went to the presence of Śrī Krishna.

Seeing Vrinda approaching rapidly with lips trembling in agitation, Krishna assumed that she had accomplished her task. But overwhelmed with grief, his heart shattered by the fire of separation from Rādhā, he collapsed upon the ground, releasing long, sorrowful sighs and lamenting helplessly.

“O Rādhe! O Rādhe!” he cried again and again. “O doe-eyed one, O graceful walker like an intoxicated elephant, O slender-waisted one—casting me into an ocean of sorrow, where have you gone?”

Thus weeping, his eyes closing in near-unconsciousness, the all-deluding Lord—who enchants even Śiva and all the gods by his own māyā—became faint due to separation from his beloved. What wonder is there in this?

Again and again he fell senseless upon the ground, lamenting repeatedly. Seeing this state of Śrī Krishna, the blameless Vrinda rushed to him, lifted him with both arms, and seated him upright. She brought cool, fragrant water, gently bathed him, wiped the dust from his body, and slowly restored his consciousness. Seeing firmness return to him like one revived from death, she comforted him with many reassuring words. Hearing Rādhā’s words from the messenger, Krishna regained life itself—yet seeing that Rādhā’s pride remained unbroken, he fell silent, pondering what means could now dissolve her pride.

Thus ends the twenty-fourth chapter, titled "The Description of Radha’s pride", in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twenty-Five: The Pacification of Rādhā’s Pride

Brahmā said: O sage, thereafter Śrī Krishna resolved within himself to break Rādhā's pride. He went to the Yamunā, bathed in her waters, assumed a firm posture, and with concentrated mind began worship of Śiva for the purpose of appeasing Rādhā.

Smearing himself with sacred ash, seated upon ashes, wearing tiger-skin, purified by observance of vows, Krishna continuously chanted the supreme mantra of Mahādeva, day and night.

He bathed Śiva with the cool waters of the Yamunā and worshipped him with faultless bilva leaves. Absorbed in silence and deep meditation, he fixed his mind upon Śiva, the bearer of the crescent moon.

As Krishna performed severe austerities with unwavering focus, Śiva, the lord of Kailāsa, unable to remain in his abode, became drawn by Krishna's intense devotion. Accompanied by Umā at his left side, he illuminated all directions with his radiance and quickly arrived before Krishna.

Śiva appeared seated upon a bull, white as crystal and moonlight, with four long, smooth arms like lotus stalks, and a gently smiling face. His neck was adorned with rudrākṣa beads and garlands of bones; serpents served as his earrings and sacred thread; his body was decorated with various ornaments; he wore tiger-skin garments; his limbs were smeared with sacred ash; and he continuously chanted the name of Nārāyaṇa.

Descending from the bull as a lion descends from a mountain peak, Śiva bowed at Krishna's feet. With head bent low in devotion, he began to speak words of praise to please him.

Śiva said: O Supreme Soul, you are unmoving, rootless, eternal, peaceful, desireless, formless, beyond the grasp of the senses. Though beyond all qualities, you are the repository of all virtues, known through your own excellence.

You are existence, consciousness, and bliss itself, yet you possess divine form. You are the Supreme Self of all embodied beings. Though manifest as the universe, you remain untouched and transcendent, beyond even the highest reality.

You are the creator as Brahmā, the preserver as Viṣṇu, and the destroyer as Śiva. Though one, you appear in many forms. You dwell in the universe, and the universe dwells in you. You are Vāsudeva. I bow to you.

I am your servant—command me. Grant me your permission and tell me what is to be done.

Brahmā said: Thus praised by Śiva, Śrī Krishna, his face radiant like the rising sun at dawn, spoke to him with auspicious words.

Śrī Krishna said: O Śiva, O lord of Umā, O destroyer of darkness, make me the recipient of your grace. I am now submerged in an ocean of sorrow—out of compassion, lift me up and rescue me.

"O enemy of Andhaka! O Hara! Bestow upon me the form of a yogi. Adopting that guise, like a beggar, I shall beg for the submission of Sri Radha's heart as alms—that which will pacify her pride."

Brahma said: O Angiras! Thus commanded by the Lord, the Master of the seven principles, Hara—the lord of great yogis—dressed the Lord Sri Krishna in a tiger skin (ruru), adorned Him with sacred ash (vibhuti) and a garland of rudraksha, and arranged Him in the proper attire of an ascetic. He then dressed the cowherd boys of the same age, who were His followers, as His disciples in the attire of ascetics.

Having fashioned this supreme attire, which was approved by the slayer of Mara, and having provided the most enchanting yogi-attire for all the companions, Bhava, being honored by Sri Krishna and taking His permission, vanished in an instant from everyone's sight.

Thereafter, Sri Krishna, the best of yogis, surrounded by the cowherd boys in the form of yogis and accompanied by His group of disciples, shone like another sage Durvasas. His appearance manifested an identity non-different from that of Durvasas.

Blazing with His vast, Brahman-infused splendor like a kindled fire, Hari, worshipped by those cowherd boys in ascetic dress, went to the house of the cowherd-king Malyaka, the father of Ayana and father-in-law of Sri Radha.

Coming to the door in the guise of a false beggar, He said, "Give alms!" Hearing the sound of this beggar, Jatila, the mother of Ayana, said to the companions of Sri Radha:

"Near the gate, the loud voice of a beggar is clearly heard. O companions of Radha! Take the alms and go quickly to give them to the beggar."

"O best of yogis! We bow to you. Please accept these alms brought by us."

The Ascetic said: Hearing these words of Radha's companions, the false yogi, with a satisfied mind, said: "O sinless companions! Listen first to my rules for accepting alms, then give! I do not accept alms from those whose husbands are not present, nor do I drink water from them. I accept nothing from those who lack devotion, who are arrogant, or who are slanderers."

"I do not desire alms from those who do not worship Hari, nor from a widow. Long ago, my Guru, the Lord with the moon on His crest (Shiva), commanded me to maintain this vow; therefore, I have held this rule ever since."

"You all live in another’s house and are famous in the world as maidservants (Sairindhris), and you are all without your husbands here. Therefore, I do not desire alms from your hands. Go inside and submit my words to your mistress."

Brahma said: O Angiras! Hearing these words spoken by him and noticing the yogi's refusal to accept alms, the companions quickly returned to the inner chambers and related the entire matter to the wife of Malyaka (Jatila).

O best of those who know Brahman! After the companions had detailed everything exactly as it happened with the false yogi, Jatila, hearing those harsh words, remained silent and meditated for a moment with a dejected mind. Then she spoke to the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha.

Jatila said: "O Radha! O beautiful one! If a beggar leaves one’s house disappointed, the merit earned through a hundred births is destroyed at that very moment."

"O Princess! If a beggar departs from one's home with broken hopes, then the gurus, ancestors, perfected beings, gods, and pure-hearted guests will never touch the water, flowers, or food offered by that person."

"When a guest returns from a house disappointed, he transfers all his own sins to that householder and takes away all of the householder's merit. Therefore, O Radha, go immediately and give alms to the beggar with care."

Sri Radha said: "I am unable to go easily with my full strength. O Mother! You ask me again and again to go and give alms, but I have become extremely weak due to a multitude of ailments. Even with effort and all my strength, I cannot manage to walk even three or four steps comfortably."

Jatila said: "I see the fault in my mind, O child! If a beggar leaves disappointed and becomes angry, he could burn the entire lineage and the kingdom; a Brahmana is like a personified fire, there is no doubt of this."

"O sinless one! O fair-faced one! If a guest departs satisfied with the householder, then supreme welfare comes to the master of the house, his son, his lineage, his wealth, his kingdom, and his friends. This is the firm conviction of my intellect."

Sri Radha said: Hearing these words from the mouth of her mother-in-law Jatila, Sri Radha then said to her: "O Mother! You are indeed commanding me. But my mouth is parched, the skin of my body is withering, my mind has no steadiness, I am constantly exhausted, my hair stands on end, and my whole body is trembling. A great illness has come upon me at this time."

"O Mother! I cannot stand steady even for a moment. Tell me, what shall I do for you now? (How can I repeatedly disobey your command?)"

Jatila said: Even after hearing Radha's distressed words, Jatila spoke to her again: "O Mother! O daughter of Vrishabhanu! That great yogi guest will never accept alms from my hand because I am a widow. Therefore, if the welfare of you both is desired—for the fulfillment of the auspicious welfare of you and your husband, my son Ayana—go quickly and give alms to the great yogi."

Brahma said: O child! O Sage! Hearing the beneficial and proper words from the mouth of her mother-in-law, Sri Radha, carrying the vessel of alms in her hand and surrounded by the circle of her companions, approached the presence of the great yogi.

Going near the ascetic, who was surrounded by the previously mentioned yogis, the Princess saw the great yogi with matted hair (Jatila), who was peaceful and shone with a brilliance like the moon or the Kunda flower.

His entire body was smeared with sacred ash, and he wore garments of bark and a loincloth. He was most beautiful, bearing rudraksha beads, bones, and a rosary (Akshamala)—that is, a garland of rudraksha seeds around his neck, a rosary in his palm, and rudraksha bands on his arms.

His lotus-face was serene, and his body was blazing with the brilliance of Brahman like a kindled fire. His body was covered by a beard that hung down and swayed as far as his navel.

O twice-born! Seeing the Lord surrounded by many disciples and grand-disciples who wore attire and ornaments just like His own, Radhika, the daughter of Vrishabhanu, prostrated repeatedly and said: "O best of yogis! With great care and according to the rules, I have brought alms worthy of worship for your satisfaction. Please graciously accept them."

Sri Radha said: "O best of sages! Accept these alms from me if you so desire. I am unable to remain standing; my mind is reeling as if spinning. I cannot stay steady."

"O Master! My lotus-face is parched, the skin of my body burns with a terrible heat, the hair on my body is standing on end, and my entire frame is trembling."

Hearing these soft and sweet-syllabled words of hers, the yogi Hari (Sri Krishna), the slayer of Madhu, in His new ascetic guise, said to the daughter of Vrishabhanu with a slight smile.

The Ascetic said: "O wise one! (Addressing Angiras): To satisfy Sri Radha, who is dearer than life, the great ascetic spoke these sweet words indicating the acceptance of alms."

"O daughter of Vrishabhanu! O daughter of cowherds! If it is indeed your duty to give alms, O faultless one! Then you must be prepared to give the alms that I desire; otherwise, there is no need."

Sri Radha said: "O Lord! O Master of the world! I am but a poor, weak girl; how can I give what You desire? I am unable even to walk, O Sage!"

The Ascetic said: "O faultless one of enchanting form! Give only that which is appropriate to be given to an unworthy person like me. Whether you are capable or incapable of giving alms—all such matters I know through the power of My penance. Therefore, I shall ask only for that which is within your power."

"If it is possible, give it to Me; I do not ask for the impossible. Having considered this, first make a promise and then give; do not do otherwise. Knowing this, I shall ask for alms."

Sri Radha said: "If the thing to be given is just, and if it is within my power, and if it is not contrary to Dharma, O noble one! I promise that I shall give it; I make this vow."

The Ascetic said: "O fair-faced one! There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be given by a donor. To seekers who are in absolute need, compassionate donors even give their own lives."

"Therefore, O faultless one! I ask of you that which has been done—the terrible pride. The pride that you assumed previously during the night in the bower-forest through a lovers' quarrel with Sri Krishna, and because of which Sri Krishna now desires death—I have appeared before you in the guise of a beggar for that purpose. Now, give me that pride as alms."

Brahma said: Hearing these words from the mouth of the great yogi, Sri Radha, who has assumed a human form for her pastimes, became overwhelmed with grief and lowered her head; tears of unhappiness began to flow from her two eyes.

With a voice choked with tears, the daughter of Vrishabhanu then spoke to the great yogi.

Sri Radha said: "O best of yogis! What is the use of all those words? O noble one! O Lord! Now, from among wealth, gems, clothes, food, villages, cities, horses, or elephants, whatever You desire to accept, please take that and protect me."

The Ascetic said: "O pride-filled daughter of Vrishabhanu! What need have I for villages, gems, wealth, or clothes and vehicles? O faultless one! Having made a promise, if you do not give the garment of My desire, then what more shall I do with you?"

"If a person, after making a promise to a seeker, does not give the promised object, that person resides eternally in a terrifying hell, the source of all agony, along with his ancestors and forefathers."

Sri Radha said: "O Teacher! You are a Guru and today a guest in our home. I have become proud toward Krishna; tell me, what profit is there for You in begging for that pride? Now, be gracious toward me, accept wealth, gems, and clothes, and protect me."

Brahma said: O Angiras! Hearing these words from her lotus-mouth, Adhokshaja Sri Krishna, the best of yogis, decided to depart, appearing indifferent to any other alms.

Seeing the ascetic with a firm mind intending to depart with a faded face, Sri Radha, with a blooming lotus-face and a slight smile, said: "O best of yogis! Do not turn back. The pride I held toward Sri Krishna, I give to You as alms today."

Having received the desired alms, the enemy of Madhu became as if his life's purpose was fulfilled. Then, withdrawing His yogi form and assuming His true form, Hari went to the bower-forest on the banks of the Yamuna along with Sri Radha.

Thus ends the twenty-fifth chapter, titled "The Pacification of Sri Radha," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Sri Brahmanda Mahapurana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis

Chapter Twenty-Six: The Proclamation of Sri Radha's Slander

Brahma said: O Sage! Because of the son of Nanda, Sri Krishna, staying frequently in secluded places with Sri Radha, and because of their conversations and amorous play on the banks of the Yamuna, and their mutual passion and relish for pastimes, the people living in the holy Gokula began to whisper among themselves.

The cowherds and gopis of Gokula, and the citizens and neighbors, meeting in groups, began a great rumor: that the son of Yashoda, Sri Krishna, has formed a distinct affection for Ayana's wife, Radha. Though they did not speak it openly, in everyone's mind, they deduced that this matter could not remain a secret.

Thereafter, day by day, the news of the faulty love between Radha and Krishna gradually reached the bathing ghats, the fields, the roads, the pastures, the forests, and the banks of the Yamuna. Wherever people met, they began to speak of it.

Whether sitting in their own homes, or when friends from the city and town met on the road, people secretly began to proclaim the scandal of Sri Radha.

"O Sage! Everyone began to say with certainty that amorous play occurs daily in secret between the son of the cowherd-king Nanda and the daughter of Vrishabhanu, the wife of Ayana. We can say this without a doubt."

When other Gopis met together, they addressed each other: "O friend! You may say what you like, but from their gait, speech, and gestures, there is no doubt in my mind that this matter is true; it can never be a false occurrence." Making such deductions, everyone spoke of it daily.

O best of the twice-born! In this way, a great infamy regarding Sri Radha arose in every house in the circle of Vraja. At first, some had believed it while others, knowing Radha to be chaste, did not believe much. But gradually, due to the abundance of rumors, it became the conviction of almost everyone. Hearing the proclamation of her own scandal from the lips of the multitude, Radhika's

lotus-face turned pale with shame and fear. Seeing Sri Krishna in a secret spot one day, Radha began to speak.

Radha said: "O Lord! O Life-beloved Govinda! O Master! The cowherds and gopis are all slandering me, calling me the 'scandalous woman of Krishna.' Alas! Has this finally happened to my fate because of You?"

"O Lord Sri Krishna! (Death is better than living with scandal; I can no longer bear it.) O Master! It is better to drink the Halahala poison, or to die by hanging from a rope, or to depart to the path of death by the strike of a knife to the throat."

"O best among the sons of the Raghu clan! O Lord of my life! A person whose ill-fame and lack of glory are proclaimed is dead even while living. But that fortunate person whose fame and glory are widespread remains alive even after death."

"O Madhusudana! One whose infamy is sung by the people is dead even while alive. Therefore, Sri Krishna, having reached such a state, I am no longer capable of sustaining my life even for a moment."

"My life must certainly be given up, as death is superior to base slander. O Lord! I see not even an atom of result in maintaining my life."

"Alas! Govinda! I have surely concluded that my heart was crafted by the Creator from the essence of stone and iron; otherwise, why did it not shatter into a hundred pieces even after being slandered by all people?"

"O my life-breaths! If you wish to be dear to me, why do you not reside within a sacrificial fire or within a mass of water? What is the need for you to dwell in the base heart of this scandalous woman?"

Brahma said: O child! Hearing the words of the one overwhelmed with grief, Janardana Sri Krishna, the joy of the Yadu clan, whose lips were trembling with great anger and whose eyes were filled with tears, spoke to her with calming words.

Krishna said: "Do not be distressed, do not fear, O beloved! What is there to fear while I am alive? I shall remove this scandal that has been proclaimed against you

by the people of the town and the countryside. I shall make you stainless in this land of Vraja."

"I speak with my own power in your presence; I shall make your detractors the subject of scandal themselves. I swear this to be true before you, and it shall not be otherwise. Keep your mind at peace for a moment; you shall see that my words are never false."

Brahma said: Having consoled her with these words, the Lord Hari, the inner-controller of all, returned from the bower-forest to the house of Nanda as the night came to an end.

Brahma said to Angiras: O Sage! Then Madhusudana, the destroyer of dangers, expanded His illusion (Maya) and, under the guise of a false illness, lay in the lap of Mother Yashoda on the bed, appearing to fall into a swoon. His body seemed overcome by phlegm, and his entire frame became paralyzed and senseless due to an unbearable headache.

Having fashioned this great illusion of a major disease in His body, Bhagavan Govinda remained lying there as morning broke. Upon seeing him, Nanda, the King of Vraja, and Yashoda, the Queen of the house and mother of Krishna, seeing Krishna in a senseless state, began to call him. "O Krishna! O child! Why have you become like this? O son! It is late; I have brought this fresh butter, please eat it."

Yashoda said: "Come, child, eat this! Your companions, the cowherd boys, have arrived. With a joyful heart, eat this curd, milk, and cream with them. Son! Rise, rise! I, your mother Yashoda, am calling you again and again. Let my heart be cooled by hearing you call me 'Mother' just once with that moon-like face and sweet voice."

Brahma said to Angiras: O Sage! Though Mother Yashoda called him repeatedly, Krishna did not answer at all. He remained as if senseless from the agony of a severe illness. Seeing this, Yashoda Devi became terrified and nearly fainted.

The son of Nanda, who assumes many forms, did not move a single limb. How can the meager people of the human world understand the Maya of the Great

Illusionist? Even the gods, fixed in knowledge through the power of penance, find it difficult to comprehend.

Whose Maya eternally keeps all the gods, headed by me (Brahma), lying on the bed of delusion! Seeing Sri Krishna in such a state, Yashoda, the wife of Nanda, became overwhelmed with grief, struck her chest, and cried out in a loud wail. "Alas! What has happened to me today? Why has my Krishna become like this?"

Seeing Krishna overcome by illness, Sri Yashoda, with a heart full of sorrow, remembered the Lord and said: "Alas, Krishna! Alas, Jagannatha, protector of the world! Alas, Govinda, beloved of the poor! O Lord of the Universe! I am sinking into an ocean of danger and I remember You. Protect me, O Lord! Do not let me drown in this sea of calamity."

Hearing this distressed cry, all the women of Vraja—Prabhavati, Gunavati, Chandramala, and Rohini—came running in haste to the house of Yashoda.

Nanda, Upananda, Nandabhadra, and hundreds of other cowherds and cowherd boys, as well as the townspeople, country dwellers, servants, merchants, and friends, all arrived at the house of Nanda immediately.

O Sage Angiras! They arrived with their clothes, ornaments, and hair disheveled from running; their bodies and garments were soaked with perspiration. They saw Krishna sitting in the lap of Yashoda, his eyes closed and devoid of consciousness.

The lotus-face of Sri Krishna had turned pale; it no longer possessed its former brilliance. He was silent, unable to speak a word. Seeing the son of Nanda in such a state, hundreds and thousands of cowherds and gopis became terrified and struck with wonder.

Bewildered, everyone asked, "What is this? How did this happen so suddenly?" With troubled minds and pale faces, everyone began to wander here and there in fear, wondering what could be done now.

Among them was a cowherd named Nandabhadra, who was endowed with many virtues. He was highly intelligent, expert, wise, and respected by the learned; he possessed great patience and a sharp intellect.

Nandabhadra said: "O mighty-armed Nanda! O Upananda! O Prananda! Listen to these beneficial, wholesome, and true words from me."

"O King of Vraja! Call the peaceful Brahmanas who are masters of the Vedas and Vedangas. For the welfare of your child, have them perform a great ritual for auspiciousness (Svastyayana) immediately, with a focused and doubtless mind."

"Also, bring physicians learned in Ayurveda and well-practiced in medicine. Have them administer the chief medicine called 'Sarvavayava-sundara' (Beautiful in all limbs). By serving that chief medicine, your boy will surely be cured quickly; have no worry."

Brahma said to Angiras: O child! Hearing these true and beneficial words from the mouth of Nandabhadra, King Nanda immediately brought peaceful Brahmanas endowed with the fire of penance and knowledge. They began to worship the deities with offerings for the welfare of the boy.

Thereafter, Nanda, the King of Vraja, sent out hundreds of swift messengers, expert in their task, to search for a physician in the assemblies of kings, in the pastures, in the groves, and on the royal roads of cities.

They searched on the holy banks of rivers, in holy temples and pilgrimage sites, in cities, kingdoms, countries, and all inhabited places where prominent people reside.

The messengers sent by Nanda searched through the hermitages of great sages learned in the Vedas and Vedangas, but they could find no physician anywhere.

Then, as the unsuccessful messengers were returning to the house of Nanda, they met a physician. He was as radiant as the sun, with a very brilliant face and eyes as clear and red as a blooming lotus. He carried books of medicine and many medicine chests.

The Messengers said: Seeing him, they asked with joyful hearts: "O traveler! Who are you? For what purpose are you wandering here?" Hearing the messengers' question, the King of Physicians in disguise replied.

The Physician said: "Know me as the King of Physicians, the enemy of diseases and their healer. I am always sought by kings and noble men who are afflicted with ailments. Know me as the knower of the cause of all unions (diseases)."

Brahma said to Angiras: O child! Hearing these words from the mouth of the disguised King of Physicians, the messengers, with joyful hearts, spoke to him. "O King of Physicians! If you are indeed the King of Physicians, then graciously come with us to the presence of Nanda, the King of the cowherds."

"If you have the power to heal diseases, O Master, then we shall show you the son of our protector, Nanda the cowherd, who is afflicted with an illness."

"Come with us! Your labor will not be in vain. If you can cure him, you shall receive great wealth from the King of the cowherds."

Hearing their words, the best of physicians in disguise, filled with joy, entered the city of the King of the cowherds with them.

Beholding that the King of Physicians had arrived at the house, Nanda and the other cowherds worshipped him according to the rules, prostrating before him and offering water for the feet and Madhuparka.

After the guest had been received and was seated and rested, Nanda, with joined palms and great respect, spoke to the disguised physician.

Nanda said: "O Lord! I have sought your protection, O King of Physicians. You are the end of diseases; please cure the disease that has risen in my son's body."

The Physician said: "O King of Cowherds, do not fear. In My presence, perform this deed: using a pot filled with a hundred holes, bring water from the Yamuna river immediately through a woman who is a chaste wife devoted to only one husband. By the power of the great medicine [mixed with that water], your son shall suddenly regain consciousness."

Brahma said: "O child Angiras! Having received this command from the King of Physicians, the wise Nanda reflected and brought many famous women devoted to one husband to his home—those who were greatly proud in the circle of Vraja, considering themselves true chaste wives (Satis)."

"The high-minded Nanda sent many of them to the Yamuna for water. He gave them the pot with holes and said, 'O chaste and noble women! All of you, go quickly and bring water from the Yamuna in this vessel.' Hearing this, the highly proud cowherd women extended their arms and went to the Yamuna, but they were unable to bring the water. That is, being deluded by the Lord's Maya, they could not lift even a single drop of water in that pot."

"With pale faces, those women returned, fleeing in all directions. Their pride broken, they left the pot on the sandy banks of the Yamuna. They became consumed with thought, wondering, 'Alas! What a disaster! How can we show our faces in Vraja again?'"

"Seeing that the women were taking a long time at the river, Nanda and the other cowherds began to wonder why the chaste wives who went for water were so delayed. Therefore, to search for them, he again sent swift-moving cowherds to the banks of the Yamuna."

"The cowherds sent by Nanda rushed to the banks of the Yamuna where the proud Gopis had gone with the sieve-like pot. But they saw no Gopis there; they only saw the pot placed upon the sand by the riverbank."

"Seeing no woman, nor any man or anyone else, they took the pot and returned quickly to King Nanda. Giving him the pot, they related the entire sequence of events."

"When the cowherds described the state of the Gopis—who were now devoid of enthusiasm and pride, like serpents with broken fangs—the helpless Nanda, with a trembling heart, went to his beloved Yashoda and spoke."

Nanda said: “O Queen! I have come feeling very anxious. I see no way for the welfare of your son Krishna.”

"O beautiful one! By what means can the life of my Krishna be saved? What should be done? Those Gopis whom I sent to the Yamuna, believing them to be chaste wives, were none of them of good character."

"O Great Queen Yashoda! Those women who were proud of their chastity were unable to succeed. Devoid of enthusiasm and with broken pride, they left the vessel on the bank and fled in shame. Therefore, what is the remedy now?"

Yashoda said: “O King! What is there to fear? Listen to what I say at this time. If those women could not bring water, why do you worry? I myself shall take this pot with holes and bring water from the Yamuna.”

“O Nanda, dear as my life! You know everything; I am famous everywhere as a chaste wife devoted to one husband. O best of kings! You have known my complete nature thoroughly since my childhood.”

“Go quickly and inform the King of Physicians of this. I shall do whatever the physician tells me.”

Brahma said: "O child Angiras! After hearing Yashoda's words, the wise Nanda went to the presence of the Physician to inform him of everything the Queen had said for the welfare of his son."

Nanda said: "O Lord of Physicians! Hear my words now. Those women whom I sent to the banks of the Yamuna by your command, believing them to be chaste, have all been unsuccessful."

"'Not only have they failed, but those women have fled in shame in ten directions, their pride and enthusiasm destroyed. Now Queen Yashoda is prepared to take that pot and fetch the water. She has sent me to your presence to inform you of this fact. What do you command in this matter?'"

Brahma said: "O child! Hearing the words spoken by Nanda, the excellent Physician smiled deeply and began to think in his mind: 'What remedy should I employ now?'"

"'In all the three worlds, I am the inner-controller of all—including gods, demons, Rakshasas, Daityas, Yakshas, humans, Gandharvas, and Apsaras. I am the gem of the heart (Chintamani); what is unknown to me?'"

"'I observe everyone's most secret feelings from a single point. No one can do anything by hiding from Me. I am the most secret of secrets. The Gopi Yashoda does not know Me as the protector of all worlds.'"

"'I am unable to protect them in this sorrow—that is, when Yashoda is ready to bring the water. Being known as a friend, no one ever performs such an act through deceit against a mother.'"

"'Let another woman who will fetch the water from the Yamuna abandon her shame. I am the punisher of the wicked and the protector of the virtuous; therefore, it is necessary to create a means so that Yashoda does not have the intention of fetching the water.'"

"'Furthermore, I have addressed Yashoda as 'Mother' in Gokula, having come from Mathura after taking birth from the womb of Devaki. I, the great-minded one, reside as the intellect in all beings; it is not right for Me to cause shame to Yashoda.'"

Thus ends the twenty-sixth chapter, titled "The Proclamation of Sri Radha's Slander," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: The Healing of Sri Krishna and the Removal of Sri Radha's Scandal

Brahma said: "Reflecting in his mind, the Physician spoke true and beneficial words to Nanda, for himself and the Queen."

The Physician said: "O King! Hear the true words that are beneficial to your Queen, O Lord. Do not consider that which is brought by a mother to be the medicine."

"'Even if a mother gives harsh poison to her son, it acts as nectar for him. O best of kings, Nanda! A mother's effort never leads to the curing of a sick son's illness; you should consider this to be certain.'"

"'Therefore, never give a medicine brought by a mother to the boy. If you desire the welfare of your son, then have the water of the Yamuna brought by other women to counteract the disease.'"

Brahma said: "O child! Hearing those true and beneficial words spoken by the Great Soul, Nanda immediately sent wise and swift messengers to the region of Koshala."

"Those messengers went quickly and related the entire matter to Jatila, the wife of the cowherd Malyaka and mother of Ayana. Hearing everything in detail from the messengers, Jatila became overwhelmed with great sorrow."

"Taking her two daughters, Kutila and Prabhakari, and the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha, along with her companions and other women of the town and countryside, she set out in haste."

"Hundreds of other Gopis, considering themselves chaste wives devoted to one husband, traveled along. On the way, one would say, 'I shall go and bring the water,' and another would say, 'Why you? I shall bring it first.' Thus, they traveled while boasting to one another."

"Talking among themselves in this way, they all arrived at the house of Nanda. Seeing all those women who claimed to be chaste wives arriving at his home, the King of Vraja, Nanda, called them with respect and spoke."

Nanda said: "O women! I and everyone else know your nature thoroughly. You are all chaste wives devoted to one husband. Now, out of compassion, please bring water from the Kalindi in this vessel full of holes and grant life to my son."

Brahma said: "O Angiras! Hearing these words spoken by Nanda, all of them gathered together and began to argue among themselves, each saying, 'I shall go first.'"

"Thereafter, following one another in order and filled with great pride, they approached the banks of the Yamuna. One by one, they filled the pot from the flowing current and stepped back onto the shore of the daughter of the sun (Yamuna)."

"Upon looking at the pot, they saw that its belly was empty; there was not even a small amount of water within it. Seeing this, they abandoned the pot and, with heads bowed in shame, departed. Thus, their pride broken, they all fled in ten directions with garments soaked in water."

"When those cowherd women failed to accomplish the task, the dejected Nanda returned to the Physician and spoke these words: 'O noble King of Physicians! Now, not a single woman has proven capable of bringing water from the Yamuna. Therefore, tell me, what shall be my fate?'"

Brahma said: "O child! Hearing the distressed plea of Nanda, the Physician, with a compassionate heart and a slight smile, spoke to the King of the cowherds: 'O King, what is there to fear? You shall have welfare. There are many other women now; send them to fetch the water.'"

Nanda said: "Hearing the words of the Physician, King Nanda said: 'O Lord of Physicians! Judging by my own intellect, I do not see any other such chaste woman in this circle of Vraja. Therefore, decide what we must do and tell me.'"

The Physician said: "O King! O high-minded one! I possess a divine power; I am a knower of destiny in every way. Therefore, O Lord of cowherds! By my intellect, I have calculated that there is such a chaste woman in this Gokula. I tell this to you: for the welfare of your son, have the water brought from the Yamuna by her.'"

"O King! In this circle of Vraja, there is a daughter of King Vrishabhanu named Radha, who is a chaste wife devoted to one husband. She is married to Ayana, the son of the cowherd Malyaka. That noble jewel among women is present in your house; there is no chaste woman like her in the three worlds."

"If that jewel among women, the beautiful Radha with enchanting limbs, becomes pleased and goes to fetch the water, filling the pot with holes from the Yamuna, only then will welfare occur."

"O best of cowherds! I know all this through the power of my divine sight; of this, there is no doubt. Once that Radha brings the water, be certain that your son shall be well."

Brahma said: "O child! Hearing these words spoken by the Physician, Nanda, the Lord of the cowherds of Vraja, approached Sri Radhika and, sighing deeply, spoke to her distressedly."

Nanda said: "O Radha of beautiful limbs! Listen to my words which are for my total welfare. Being pleased with me, O auspicious one, save me and grant life to my son."

"Desiring my life, take this pot with holes and go to the shore of the daughter of the sun to fetch water, fulfilling my cherished desire."

"O fair-faced one! All people in the world marry a wife with the desire to see the face of a son, and a son is desired for the sake of the funeral cake (Pinda). O sinless one! Ancestors are eternally desirous of receiving the water-offering from a son."

"O one of beautiful waist! In the same way, maternal aunts also eternally desire the water-offering given by a nephew who is like a son. Therefore, my son Krishna is the son of your husband's sister; thus, by my reasoned judgment, the water-offering from this Krishna is also desirable for you."

"O large-eyed Radha! It is the noble duty of an aunt to protect her nephew. Therefore, perform that duty as prescribed. Krishna is my son, and according to the scriptures, he is your son as well; of this, there is no doubt."

"O one of beautiful waist! All of us in this world are related through the Pinda—that is, we desire the water-offering from sons and such. O Sri Radha of enchanting smiles! I inform you that this King of Physicians is omniscient."

"O daughter of Vrishabhanu! This Physician is respected by the virtuous and knows destiny. He cannot be compared to ordinary physicians, for he knows the internal state of everyone."

Brahma said: "O high-minded Angirasa! Hearing these sweet-syllabled words of the King of the cowherds, Radha, her eyes filled with tears, spoke distressedly to the noble Nanda."

Sri Radha said: "O lotus-eyed Nanda, Lord of cowherds! I shall never be capable of bringing water from the Yamuna with this pot full of holes. Consider this in your own mind and speak to me."

"I am exhausted, burdened by the weight of my hips and my heavy breasts. Carrying the weight of both, I am very tired and afflicted by a hundred ailments; especially now, I am nearly overwhelmed by a multitude of sorrows."

"O Lord of cowherds, husband of Yashoda! For this reason, send some other excellent woman to the banks of the Kalindi to fetch water; that will bring you welfare. I can never be capable of accomplishing this task.'\"

Nanda said: "O fortunate daughter of the sun! By exercising my own intellect and searching with care, I see no woman in this circle of Vraja superior to you. For among all the women in the world, you are the most excellent."

Brahma said: "O child! Thereafter, rising from her place, the daughter of the king of cowherds, Sri Radha, went to a secluded spot with Nanda and spoke to the Lord of cowherds."

Sri Radha said: "O Lord of cowherds! In this Gokula, in the assembly of the virtuous, a great scandal has arisen that Radha is scandalous. Therefore, do not send me to bring water from the Yamuna with a pot of a thousand holes."

"In every gathering, in every pasture, in every grove, and on every path, all people currently speak of my scandal. Even knowing all this especially well, why do you still desire to send me to fetch water? It is not right for you to cause me needless shame."

Nanda said: "O woman of enchanting character! In this most excellent town of Vraja, there are many cowherd women. But this excellent Physician, who is respected by the virtuous, has recognized only you as the supremely chaste one among them and is appointing you to perform this task."

"O doe-eyed one! The townspeople and city-dwellers all give you a false reputation and call you scandalous; of this, my intellect is entirely convinced. For

this King of Physicians, a man graced by destiny, has known for certain that you alone are chaste."

"With a peaceful heart and without doubt, go fetch the water. Virtuous men like this Physician never employ an unworthy or unchaste person for a virtuous deed. Therefore, with a mind free from fear, go to the banks of the Kalindi with this pot of a thousand holes and bring the water. Do not doubt; success will be yours."

Brahma said: "O best of sages, Angiras! Hearing these words of King Nanda, that daughter of Vrishabhanu, though terrified by shame and fear in her dejected mind, agreed. But becoming overwhelmed and remembering Govinda, her body was incessantly bathed in the water of her eyes."

"O wise one! Overcome by great sorrow and grief, she began to sigh deeply like a female serpent. At that time, her thoughts fixed only on Krishna, she could not say anything to Nanda; she only began to remember Janardana in her heart to remove her shame."

"Then Radha, placing the excellent pot at her waist and surrounded by her circle of companions, set out toward the banks of the Yamuna to fetch the water."

“Having descended into the waters of the Yamuna and filled the perforated vessel with water, she meditated upon the two lotus feet of Lord Narayana, which are like blooming red lotuses, and rose onto the shore. At that moment, Radha saw within the vessel that Krishna, assuming numerous forms corresponding to the holes of the pot, had covered every single opening.

Beholding a hundred Krishnas stationed within the hundred holes of the pot, that beautiful one, Sri Radha, her face blooming with a smile as she remembered the infinite glory of Sri Krishna, spoke words addressed to Him”

Sri Radha said: "O Lord! O Beloved of my life! Such grace is fitting for You toward a fallen servant like me; otherwise, why would all people in the entire world meditate upon You with all their being as the Merciful One, the savior of the poor?"

"O Govinda of infinite majesty! Why else would the wise, the devoted to knowledge, and the yogis in Samadhi worship You through penance, celibacy, restraint of the senses, and by observing strict rules of Yoga?"

"I, a weak woman of dull intellect, am not capable of knowing You in essence. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, despite being the creators, preservers, and destroyers of this world, are unable to know Your greatness. O Bhagavan! He who is Maha-Vishnu has become the protector of the entire universe only by Your grace; how then can ordinary people be capable of knowing the truth of You, the beginningless and endless Vishnu?"

Brahma said: Having thus propitiated Govinda—the one Lord of the great yogis and masters of Yoga—Radha, with her lotus-eyes blooming and a sweet smile, spoke to her companions.

Radha, having filled the perforated pot with water and walking with great speed, her earrings swinging upon her ears, spoke these words to her dear companions standing on the bank of the Yamuna.

Sri Radha said: "O friends of enchanting form! Look carefully and behold the pot situated at my waist; see whether water is leaking from it or not. If you wish for my welfare, do not hide anything in any way."

Brahma said: O great sage Angiras! Hearing these words of the daughter of Vrishabhanu, those deer-eyed cowherd women focused their minds with sharp intellect and observed all the holes of that pot. They did not see water falling from any of the holes in any way, because all the openings were covered with moss.

The companions said: "O friend! O daughter of Vrishabhanu with a slender waist! All the holes of the pot are covered by a network of moss; we believe this is why the water is not leaking from the vessel."

Brahma said: Hearing their words, she poured the water out of the vessel. O Sage Angiras! To dispel the doubts of everyone, she descended into the Yamuna, thoroughly wiped away the moss adhering to the surface of the pot, and once again filled the vessel, which possessed a hundred holes, with water.

Thereafter, Radha again addressed her companions and the other Gopis of Vraja who had gathered: "Look closely and see if water is leaking from the pot." They all observed the water-pot repeatedly, and in wonder, their lotus-eyes bloomed. Seeing the impossible made possible, those devoted to Radha's cause offered their thanks, while others, out of jealousy, began to deliberate and speak these words.

The companions said: "Alas, Destiny is indomitable and its prowess is hard to overcome! How many Gopis of Vraja were unable to bring water from the Yamuna and fled in shame with bowed heads?"

"Those who are devoted to one husband, noble-minded, engaged in the service of their husbands, charitable, virtuous, and endowed with all good qualities—even they were unable to bring this water and cannot lift their faces in society."

"Kutila, the sister of Ayana, who is expert in protecting religious principles, has also been shamed in society, as she too was unable to bring the water of the Yamuna in the thousand-streamed vessel."

"O friends! Behold, this Radha, who is a scandal to her lineage, who wanders day and night with other men in every forest, bower, bank of the Yamuna, flower garden, on the Giri Govardhana, and in empty houses—Alas! The ways of Destiny cannot be understood."

"Alas! O women of Vraja, behold the greatness of this unchaste woman! Such a difficult task has been accomplished by Radha, the unchaste daughter of Vrishabhanu, who is stained by the Dark One; therefore, know that Destiny alone is powerful."

"Alas, fie on us! Women like us, who are chaste and meditate on the lotus feet of our husbands day and night, were none of us able to bring water from the Yamuna in the perforated pot. Yet the wife of Malyaka's son, known as the scandalous Radha in this circle of Vraja, brought the water effortlessly within half a moment! Alas! Is this a small matter of wonder?"

"O Radha! You alone are virtuous in this circle of Vraja; indeed, he who calls you unvirtuous is himself unvirtuous. O companion! Great is your fortune! Since by

your mere hint, Destiny worked like a servant. Therefore, you are blessed and fortunate."

"Destiny never shows such grace toward those like us, whether we perform good deeds or bad. Our actions are taken as they are, but for a large-hearted person, even all sins become unacceptable. Therefore, Destiny alone is blessed; its greatness cannot be described."

"Alas! Without powerful Destiny, nothing is easy to accomplish. The path of Dharma is also unperceivable; thus, due to the subtlety of Dharma's path, people are struck with wonder that this impossible task was well-accomplished by an 'unchaste' woman."

Brahma said: Having taken that water, Sri Radha, the wife of the Lord of Vraja, with her lips like Bimba fruits, was filled with joy. In the midst of the Gopis who were like a cluster of water-lilies, she shone with a cheerful beauty like the splendor of the full moon.

The daughter of Vrishabhanu, the cause of joy for the residents of Vraja, her face like a blooming lotus, entered the courtyard of King Nanda within a moment and presented that water-pot to the King of Physicians.

O twice-born Angiras! Beholding the water presented in a thousand streams, Nanda's mind was filled with supreme juice of joy. In the presence of all, he heartfully concluded that his dead son had returned to life.

Taking the water brought by her, the disguised Physician of great nobility prepared a wondrous medicine endowed with all qualities.

The King of Physicians restored consciousness to the son of Nanda, Govinda—whose lotus-face was covered with curly hair—using that medicine. O wise one! What a wondrous human pastime of the Lord! The Lord of infinite glory, the embodiment of consciousness and the perfect Brahman, who grants consciousness to His worshippers, that inner-controller and physician of the disease of birth and death, Sri Krishna, was cured at that time by the application of the false medicine made by the Physician.

Seeing Krishna sitting up after being cured, all the cowherds and residents of Vraja began to float in the currents of the ocean of joy. Their bodies and minds were simultaneously submerged in the sea of supreme delight.

The cowherd residents of Vraja could not contain themselves in their bodies. O Sage! Being filled with supreme joy due to the destruction of the illness of Nanda's son, the disguised Physician vanished at that very moment. Then Sri Krishna, His body restored to health, prostrated before all those cowherd residents of Vraja. Among them, some began to kiss Sri Krishna's face; some wiped His face with the end of their garments; and some, filled with supreme joy, embraced Him deeply.

Thus ends the twenty-seventh chapter, titled "The Healing of the Son of Nanda and the Removal of Sri Radha's Scandal," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Sri Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

NOTE: The following two chapters are presented in Purana, but the existing manuscript ends abruptly, without the Gopis' being able to recover their goods and they are left pondering about what can be done about their kinsmen when they discover this mishap of theirs.

It has nevertheless been included for the pleasure of the devotees who enjoy the rasa of the dalliances of Krishna with Radha and the gopis.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: The Gopis' Departure for Mathura

Brahma said: O wise Angiras! Krishna, having assumed a human form for His pastimes, continued to spend His time daily in amorous play with the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha, in the secluded bower-forest. In this way, many days passed.

One day, many Gopis of Vraja, with great enthusiasm, prepared yogurt, milk, ghee, buttermilk, and fresh butter, arranged their wares, and desired to go to Mathura, the capital of Kamsa, for sale.

Those beautiful-waisted women called upon all the elderly women with moon-white hair to join them for the purpose of trade with the King Kamsa.

The capital of the King of kings, Kamsa, is Mathura, where yogurt, milk, and other items are sold at great value. For this reason, all the cowherd women of Vraja called upon their elder friend, the very aged woman with moon-white hair, Barayi, to accompany them.

O Sage! The cowherd women spoke to that widow, who was devoid of teeth, dejected, weak, and exhausted by suffering, walking with the support of a staff in her hand.

The Gopis said: "O noble Barayi, daughter of a cowherd! Listen to our words. We have prepared loads of yogurt, milk, ghee, buttermilk, and fresh butter. We now wish to go to the kingdom of Mathura to sell these goods."

"O sinless one! We are all young and unable to carry these loads to Kamsa's capital. Therefore, you must arrange for some far-sighted, swift, and powerful porters to carry these loads, and you must follow us to protect us."

Brahma said: Hearing these words of the Gopis, Barayi, out of her relationship as an elder, spoke in a jesting manner.

Barayi said: "O young women! You are all in the prime of your youth, supremely beautiful, and possessed of faultless grace. You are dressed in the finest garments and adorned with enchanting, pure ornaments and swinging earrings."

"You possess full, high breasts and are enchanting in your youth. You are expert in love and are like the personified arrows of the god of love."

"With your gestures, playfulness, grace, and sweet-syllabled tender words, and by the quality of your beauty and speech, you have the power to enchant even the god of love, Madana, the deluder of the world."

"What to speak of ordinary men? If they but catch a glimpse of you, who can say what their fate will be? O Gopis with full breasts! At the sight of you, every man will suddenly fall under the sway of the arrows of desire."

"Our King Kamsa, the lord of the Mathura region, is very wicked. He is a hater of gods and Brahmanas, always attached to the wives of others, completely devoid of family ties, and a slanderer and oppressor of friends and relatives."

"If that King Kamsa casts even one glance at you, he will fall under the sway of desire with his whole being and long for amorous pleasure. In that case, I shall never be able to bring you back from Mathura to Gokula."

The Gopis said: "O old woman! If you go before or behind us for our protection, brandishing your staff, what to speak of Kamsa? We would not fear even a god."

Barayi said: “O Gopis! If you protect yourselves while wandering in Kamsa's capital, Mathura, keeping me only as a pretext, then I shall be capable of protecting you. Otherwise, I shall never be able to bring you back to Gokula."

The Gopis said: (smiling) "O daughter! We shall do exactly as you say. That is, we will protect ourselves and you shall remain only as a pretext. O sinless one! Now, bring steady and powerful porters and appoint them to carry our loads."

Brahma said: While the Gopis were thus talking with Barayi about hiring porters to go to Mathura, Sri Krishna—the best of the Yadus and the Lord in human form—arrived before them, playing His enchanting flute.

Seeing the son of Nanda arriving, the beautiful-eyed women of Vraja became terrified and hurried about. They began to hide their yogurt, milk, ghee, and fresh butter.

O wise Angiras! The Gopis took all the goods and began to store them in the warehouses of the merchants. Seeing the cowherd women fleeing with their goods, the Lord, the knower of all hearts and all speech, spoke these words to enchant them.

Sri Krishna said: "O cowherd women! You are all residents of Vraja, and I too am the son of the King of Vraja—your own kin. Why do you fear Me so? Even after searching My intellect, I see no reason for this fear. Therefore, do not be distressed by this unfounded fear."

Brahma said: O child! Being thus reassured by the noble-hearted Lord Sri Krishna, the women of Vraja, with faces like blooming lotuses, came out before Him. Hearing the words of Sri Krishna, who is the soul of all worlds, they cast the fear from their hearts. Then all the cowherd women, with slight smiles, spoke to the lotus-eyed Sri Krishna.

The Gopis said: "O Krishna! There is a desire to go to Mathura. O Lord! Please call and appoint porters capable of carrying these loads of yogurt, milk, ghee, and butter, who are strong enough to travel with us. We make this request of You now."

Brahma said: Hearing their words, the Lord Govinda, the son of Devaki, called some cowherd boys who were in disguise and, laughing, spoke to them.

Sri Krishna said: "O porters! Take these loads and follow the women to the Mathura region. O boys! Tell Me quickly if you are capable of carrying these loads."

The boys said: "O Sri Krishna! We cannot travel very quickly with these heavy loads because we are extremely troubled by hunger. If we are given food, then we shall be able to go to Mathura."

Sri Krishna said: "O Gopis! These porters are very distressed by hunger due to lack of food. If you wish to have the loads carried by them, then give them suitable food to eat."

Brahma said: O child! Hearing these words from the mouth of Sri Krishna, the women of Vraja replied with great respect: "O Sri Krishna! We promise; we shall feed them."

Sri Krishna said: (laughingly) "O Gopis! It is not enough to feed only these porters. I too am one of the porters among them, and I am very distressed by hunger. Feed Me first, and afterward, you may give food to the other porters."

Brahma said: O child Angiras! When the Supreme Self Sri Krishna spoke these words in jest, the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radha, who understood His hint, replied to Sri Krishna: "O King of Actors! You will never be capable of carrying these loads of ours."

"One who is always lazy, weak, and incapable of walking quickly; one who is a lecher—longing for the wives of others—and excessively talkative and deceitful; such a person is never made a porter anywhere. Therefore, Sri Krishna, this work is not for You."

Sri Radha said: "O friends! We have no need for such a porter who has a big belly, is always anxious for food, eats incessantly by force, and is always full of pride. However, out of fear that He might steal our goods, give Him something to eat, that is all."

The companions said: "O companions! The King of Vraja is the benefactor of us residents. Therefore, who would dare make his dear son a porter out of fear of King Nanda?"

"King Nanda of Vraja is our protector, the Lord of Gokula, and our king. Which Gopi would even think in her mind to make his son a porter? Therefore, it is not our duty to appoint Krishna to carry loads."

"O companions! If this son of Nanda begs us for food, then out of fear of losing our dairy products, it is certainly our duty to give Him some yogurt, milk, and other items to eat."

Brahma said: O child! Having deliberated thus with their sharp intellect, the Gopis, desiring to give Him food, all spoke to the lotus-eyed Sri Krishna.

The Gopis said: "O Krishna-chandra, son of the King of Vraja! You are the son of a king. From among these edible items of yogurt and milk, please accept and eat whatever you desire. However, we will not make you carry any loads, for we have great fear of the King."

"Nanda, the Lord of cowherds, is our nourisher, protector, and ruler. If he hears that we have made you carry loads, he will surely dispense punishment upon us."

"How could that best of cowherds, Nanda, ever forgive such an unthinkable and audacious act by us wicked ones? He would undoubtedly become extremely angry at such a deed, which is condemned by the world."

Sri Krishna said: Hearing the words of the Gopis, Krishna replied: "O Gopis of beautiful smiles! Today I have a very strong desire to carry your loads. Therefore, give the loads to Me; My father will not come to know of it. I shall travel on the path in secret."

The Gopis said: "O Prince! If any traveler sees You carrying a load at any place, that person will surely go to Your father and report this entire matter to him."

Sri Krishna said: (humbly) "O beautiful women! My primary identifying mark is this crest (chuda). Therefore, I shall set aside my crest and change my attire to carry your loads; in that way, no fear will arise for you in any manner."

The Gopis said: "O Krishna! What You say is true, but if by chance the news reaches the ears of the highly powerful King Nanda, he will immediately punish us, and no one will have the power to stop him."

Brahma said: Other Gopis spoke to Krishna with sarcastic words: "O son of Nanda! Your maternal aunt (Radha) is a great scholar and the daughter of the King of kings, Vrishabhanu; she is of the rank of Your elder and superior to us all in intellect. If she makes You carry the load, she may do so; but we shall not make You carry a load even if our lives reach our throats."

O child! Hearing these words from the Gopis, Krishna, the Lord of the Gopis and joy of the Yadu clan, quickly went to Sri Radha and spoke these words.

Sri Krishna said: "O Radha, daughter of King Vrishabhanu! O greatly fortunate one! I speak truthfully; You are dearer to Me than My own life. Therefore, whatever load You give Me, I am capable of carrying it. But no one other than You has the power to make Me carry a load. I swear this to be true."

Sri Radha said: "O Krishna! You are the son of a king, but You are very dark. Therefore, I do not wish to let You touch the loads of these dairy products. Because You are of a dark complexion, my yogurt, milk, and butter will all turn black through contact with Your color."

Brahma said: O child! Hearing those words full of jest from Radha, Krishna, with joined palms and a slight smile on His face, said to the princess.

Sri Krishna said: "O Aunt! You are My maternal aunt; I can carry Your load in every way. Therefore, give the load to Me. Do not fear My father, King Nanda; He always desires to do what is pleasing to You."

Sri Radha said: "You are a natural deceiver; no one trusts You. Therefore, set aside Your deceptive words and take up the binding of this load, if You truly have such a strong desire to carry my load."

Brahma said: Hearing these enchanting words of hers, the joy of the Yadu clan (Krishna) raised His hands and began to dance, repeatedly praising the daughter of the King of Vraja with a joyful heart.

Sri Krishna said: "O princess! Give Me plenty of food first so that I may then take up the loads and go quickly to the capital of King Kamsa."

Sri Radha said: (pleased) “O Prince! This vast amount of food is present here. As You desire, I shall provide all the yogurt, milk, ghee, and butter. Eat as much as You are capable of; I shall not withhold anything."

Brahma said: O child! O sinless Angiras! When the deer-eyed Sri Radha spoke thus to Sri Krishna, the Lord, the son of Devaki, then assumed His Universal Form (Vishwarupa) and began to consume all the items.

With the desire to feed Him, Radha said to the Supreme Soul Sri Krishna: "O Krishna! Whatever I have given You to eat, if You cannot finish it, I shall not give You anything a second time."

"O son of Nanda! I make this promise before You now; do not act otherwise."

Brahma said: O child! Having spoken thus to the infallible Lord, the princess Radha gave the yogurt, milk, ghee, and butter to the wielder of the Sharnga bow, Sri Krishna, for His meal.

Krishna ate and ate, but could see no end to it. Finally, His stomach became completely full, and only then did He stop eating.

When Krishna said, "I can eat no more; my stomach is full," the daughter of Vrishabhanu, the enchantress of the world and embodiment of consciousness

(Chit-shakti), Sri Radha, said to the son of Devaki: "You were suffering so much from hunger; what happened now? Eat some more!"

Krishna, feeling embarrassed, said with a laugh: "I no longer have the strength to eat more; My desire for food has now been satisfied."

When she saw that the Lord was unable to eat any more, Radha—her eyes restless with love and her breasts heaving—spoke to him with trembling lips out of a feigned great anger: "Do not delay anymore; if You have the intention to carry the load, take it and go quickly."

Having finished the meal, Madhusudana Sri Krishna, with great joy and along with His feigned porters, lifted the loads as effortlessly as if they were garlands of flowers.

After walking some distance, the great deceiver Sri Hari, pretending to be oppressed by hunger and thirst, placed the load down from His head onto the ground and, looking at the daughter of Vrishabhanu, spoke.

Sri Krishna said: "O Princess! I can no longer carry this load. I am extremely afflicted by hunger and thirst."

Thus ends the twenty-eighth chapter, titled "The Carrying of the Loads for the Journey to Mathura," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Sri Brahmanda Purana, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Chapter Twenty-Nine: The Breaking of the Gopis' Loads by Sri Krishna

Sri Krishna said: "O Princess! O sinless one! I am extremely distressed by hunger. I am unable to go even a single step from here without accepting food."

Sri Radha said: (struck by wonder) "O Prince! What are You saying? You have just eaten a vast amount of food. You turned away from eating yogurt, milk, and butter saying You could eat no more. Tell me, what kind of hunger is this of Yours?"

"O sinless one! Where did that hunger and the blazing fire of Your stomach go when You were unable to eat the abundant dairy products? Tell me, where has this hunger come from now?"

Sri Krishna said: "O most excellent woman of Vraja! You are hunger personified. Previously, You had suppressed this hunger of Mine. Now, in Your separation, that hunger has manifested and is causing Me great pain."

"By You alone was I previously deluded in the waters of the single ocean (the dissolution), and from Your millions of colors and forms, various creatures were born."

Sri Krishna said: "O faultless one of enchanting form! Previously, desiring the satisfaction of diverse living beings and being deluded by Your inconceivable Maya, I wandered floating in the waters of the single ocean of dissolution."

"My movements are unknown even to the Vedas and scriptures; I wandered, lying upon a leaf of the Banyan tree, deluded by Your Maya—the supreme, noble, beyond the senses, and beyond the three qualities."

"The world, along with lords like me, reaches dissolution when Your eyes close, and the entire world is revealed again when Your eyes open. Therefore, You alone are the primordial cause of everything."

"Who are we to describe Your greatness, or that of the Supreme Soul? Now this hunger is troubling Me again, becoming re-ignited; therefore, please agree to feed Me once more."

Brahma said: O child! Hearing these words of the Supreme Soul, the Mahamaya, Radha, again provided all the dairy products to the wielder of the Sharnga bow, Govinda.

Having eaten according to His desire and drunk the most excellent beverages, Madhava again took up the load and set out towards the banks of the Kalindi. That is, He abandoned the path to Mathura and began to travel toward the bower-forest.

Dancing, laughing, and observing the groves as He went, Govinda, accompanied by the Gopis, reached the banks of the Yamuna. Filling His excellent flute with the

breath of His mouth, He began to sing the most enchanting songs through the melodies of various Ragas.

Brahma said: O great sage Angiras! Singing loudly and enchanting all the Gopis, Sri Krishna, having fascinated them with the sound of His flute, called out to the daughters of Vraja.

Sri Hari began to sing in a sweet, heart-stealing voice to those beautiful women; He enchanted the minds of all the women of Vraja with that song of the King of Dancers' flute.

Hearing that enchanting flute-sound, the minds of the gopis became completely submerged in an ocean of supreme bliss. That is, they forgot all other matters to be thought of.

Following Krishna, the enchanted Gopis began to wander along the paths, in the bowers, on the banks of the Yamuna, in the flower forests, and in the caves of Govardhana. The son of Nanda, surrounded by the circle of Gopis, rested from time to time beneath the steady shade of the best of trees.

The Gopis, whose minds were stolen by Krishna, became entirely deluded and forgot themselves. They could not ascertain who they were, where they had come, what they were doing, or why they were wandering with Krishna. Adorned with swinging earrings due to their swift movement, they all began to sing after hearing the music of Krishna, like women maddened.

Seeing Krishna dance, the Gopis began to dance accordingly, and in that dancing posture, their high and full breasts swayed. When Krishna laughed, they also laughed. When Krishna wandered, they all wandered with Him.

Seeing the places where Krishna played, the cowherd women played there; they laughed when He laughed, walked when He walked, stood when He stood, sat when He sat, and when Krishna lay down, they all lay down too.

If Krishna sat down anywhere for rest, the Gopis also sat there to rest. Whatever Krishna drank and whatever He ate, they too became engaged in similar drinking

and eating. Whatever deed Krishna performed according to His desire, they performed that same deed.

When He was happy, they felt happy; when He was in sorrow, they were deeply distressed. Therefore, the deluded Gopis began to behave in a manner entirely following Krishna. Being fascinated by Krishna, they could not perceive any act as beneficial or harmful, or good or bad for themselves; their intellect became confounded like one caught in a dancer's magic.

Deluded by the great Maya of the Great Illusionist, the Gopis at that time wandered everywhere, devoid of all other efforts, like those with bewildered hearts. They could not remember any other work.

Those beautiful-eyed women of Vraja completely forgot that they had come to sell yogurt in Mathura. They did not remember for even a moment the birds, residents, cows, or calves left at home.

The Gopis, fascinated by the sound of the flute, became like truly maddened people, forgetting their brothers, friends, relatives, fathers, and mothers, as if they did not exist.

O Sage! Those lotus-faced women of noble lineage, devoid of knowledge and shame, continued to follow Sri Krishna. Thereafter, having walked some distance, Sri Krishna-chandra became exhausted and, setting down the load from His head, spoke to the Gopis while laughing.

Sri Krishna said: "O Gopis with beautiful hips! I am unable to walk while carrying this heavy load. If you desire your own welfare, then walk a little slowly. I am overcome by the weight of this heavy load and can walk no further; therefore, I must rest for a moment."

The Gopis said: "O crest-jewel of deceivers! Look, the day has passed, and the thousand-rayed sun will very soon set behind the western mountains. Therefore, for the sake of our cherished work, walk this short distance with quick steps."

"O King of cowherds! Look, nearly half the day has passed. We will not be able to stay in Mathura for long. How will we sell all these goods? And we will not be able to return tomorrow either. Therefore, show us a little consideration."

"O Krishna! We especially are of slender waists, burdened by the weight of our vast hips and heavy breasts. Currently, our companions are unable to go forward with speed; they are waiting for us. Therefore, O best of men! For our sake, go quickly and do not delay."

Sri Krishna said: "O daughter of cowherds with beautiful eyebrows! I am never able to go while carrying this heavy load, for I am distressed and oppressed by its weight and am very tired."

"O cowherd women! All these porters are standing here, unable to carry the loads and having set them down. If you wish to go on the path to Mathura, then bring other porters and proceed."

"O sinless cowherd women! If you wish for your own welfare, then dismiss us. It is very late now, and we shall return home quickly. The cows are waiting, suffering for grass and water; we cannot remain here for long."

The Gopis said: "O son of Nanda! What kind of talk is this again? Why did You not say this when You were first appointed? Where shall we find other porters now? Our time is passing away; abandon Your trickery and walk quickly."

"Alas! What a disaster! Having known You to be cruel, heartless, wicked, sinful, a thief of other men's wives' pleasure, highly greedy, a great fool who thinks himself a scholar, and a total idiot—why did we appoint You with our intellect? No wonder this calamity has befallen us!"

Brahma said: O great sage! Hearing these reproachful and angry words from the red-eyed Gopis, Adhokshaja Sri Krishna, His lips trembling with feigned rage, called His disguised porters and spoke these words.

Sri Krishna said: "O porters! Therefore, all of you set down the loads from your heads and consume every bit of the yogurt, milk, ghee, and butter in them. Then

break all the pots. Let them go and complain to the King against us; whatever happens will happen later!"

Brahma said: Upon hearing these words from the mouth of the noble Bhagavan Sri Krishna, the cowherd boys, one by one and group by group, joyfully ate all the yogurt and milk and broke the yogurt pots.

Thereafter, threatening and roaring at the Gopis, the boys began to play, laughing and dancing here and there. They also began to praise Bhagavan Sri Krishna, proclaiming His character and qualities.

They began to shout various incoherent and vulgar words at one another in great delight and sang. Sometimes, overcome by feigned anger, they became ready to strike one another.

Calling out to the boys living in the city, they gave away the yogurt, ghee, and milk. Those others, full of pride, broke the Gopis' pots and threw them in all directions.

Beholding such conduct and the audacity of those boys, the doe-eyed cowherd women became dejected by the destruction of their goods. With their lips trembling in extreme rage, they spoke these words:

The Gopis said: "O son of Nanda of sinful conduct! Did you resolve in your mind to seek out this sin beforehand? Have you wasted all our goods? Was this what was in your heart? We are young maidens, friends of your youth; you reassured us and brought us to this distant place, only to punish us by revealing this treachery."

"O rogue! Do you not see? The indomitable King Kamsa, the lord of the Bhojas, the subduer of the wicked, who is impartial yet equal in wrath, is reigning over us. His laws are constantly roaring."

"All the gods, headed by Indra, await his commands. He is a great yogi of great prowess; at his glare, everyone is terrified, just as the demons tremble before the prowess of King Indra. The intent is: there is no escape for the wicked from King Kamsa."

"In anger, he is equal to Rudra; in heat, he is like the intense midday sun with a thousand rays. He has treated all the gods with contempt. While such a king exists, do you not fear to commit such outrages against his subjects?"

"That King Kamsa is established in his own authority by his own splendor. Men are always startled by fear of him. He protects those who are loyal to him, but he would even abandon his own father if he were of wicked conduct."

"All his ministers, headed by Keshi, are extremely powerful and serve him constantly; they have conquered and destroyed thousands of kings who were enemies of the state in battle."

"Those ministers of the immensely radiant Kamsa have surely subjugated the kings of the earth and filled the royal treasury by collecting vast wealth from them. The Bhojas, Dasharhas, Kukuras, Andhakas, and the Vrishni lineage are all constantly terrified."

"O wicked-minded one! The Yadavas, Pandus, Panchalas, and Kurus have fled in ten directions out of fear of him. While that ruler of the wicked exists, do you have no fear?"

"In all the three worlds, has there ever been such an outrage committed against women? O malicious one! That king has even exiled his own father from the kingdom."

"He has bound his own sister Devaki and his brother-in-law Vasudev with iron chains and cast them into prison. When even his own relatives find no escape from him, what hope of escape is there for others who commit such deeds?"

"Even after imprisoning Vasudeva and Devaki, King Kamsa did not stop; he destroyed many of their children by dashing them against a stone. While such a lord of the world—the punisher of the wicked, the deceitful, and the sinful—exists, you dare to commit such misdeeds?"

"Joining together, we shall now go to the King and report your conduct. We shall inform him of these deeds which are condemned by the world, unrighteous, and destructive of heavenly fame."

"O gopis! Let us go now. Through the ministers of King Kamsa, such as Keshi, who are difficult to approach and wielders of swift weapons, we shall arrange the punishment of this wicked-minded, arrogant son of Nanda. How long shall we endure this?"

Brahma said: "O Sage Angiras! Hearing of the suffering of his kinsmen, the destruction of his brothers, and especially the imprisonment of his parents from the mouths of the Gopis, those words pierced the heart of Sri Krishna like a spear."

Sri Krishna said: (Hearing the talk of his relatives' oppression, Govinda, filled with awakened fury, spoke to the gopis in this manner): "O gopis! I am the slayer of all the wicked-hearted. Therefore, he who is a rebel against gurus, friends, father, and mother; he who is a strayer from the path, a slanderer of gods, a destroyer of sacrifices, and a destroyer of the fame of the Bhoja and Andhaka lineages—"

"That man of petty deeds, Kamsa, who has caused great distress to my mother and father by binding them in chains—I shall destroy him along with his army, followers, city-dwellers, and ministers."

"I am the destroyer of his brothers, his sons, and all his companions. I shall surely kill Kamsa; I swear this before you. Swearing by the fruits of charity and sacrifice, I solemnly promise before you to slay Kamsa."

Brahma said: "When Vasudeva Krishna spoke thus, the residents of Vraja laughed loudly. Considering it impossible and showing contempt, they laughed at his lack of noble status. His words did not seem credible to them, appearing like the boast of an unworthy man."

The Gopis said: "These deeds might be possible for you, O son of Nanda! There is no doubt about it. But we are not Putana, nor are we the twin Arjuna trees."

"O foolish one! He is not the serpent Kaliya of the Yamuna lake, nor is he a pot of yogurt, nor is he the Govardhana mountain. He is neither a forest fire, nor the crocodile of the Yamuna, nor the whirlwind demon Trinavarta. He is King Kamsa! What power do you have to rule over him?"

"O son of a cowherd! We do not wish to hear big talk from your small mouth. Where is King Kamsa, and where are you, a cowherd? He is strong, you are weak. He is a great scholar of the scriptures, you are an unlettered fool. He is born of a great royal lineage, you are of a small lineage. He sits upon a royal throne, you are a forest-dweller and a grazer of cows."

"He is the subduer of the foremost enemies and the ruler of all people. He is wealthy, honorable, a hero, and powerful; you are extremely weak in comparison."

"He is trained in weaponry through service to a guru; you are averse to a guru and untrained. He rides in a chariot, you are a foot-soldier—he travels by chariot while you wander on foot. He has various weapons and equipment; you are weaponless. He is a young man, you are but a boy."

"O wicked-minded one! Being such a cowherd boy, you desire to destroy the immensely powerful Kamsa? This is great folly on your part. How can this be possible? To say nothing of others, it does not even seem possible to us that such a task could be accomplished by you."

"Hearing such manly words from one as weak as you, the powerful King Kamsa will have you brought from Vrindavan to Mathura and will undoubtedly destroy you, O son of Nanda!"

"If your life is dear to you, and if you wish to remain alive, never speak such impossible words before anyone again. We forbid you again and again."

Brahma said: "O child! Hearing these words from the mouths of the Gopis, the joy of the Yadus, Krishna, laughed heartily and spoke to the women of Vraja in a voice as deep as the rumbling of clouds."

Sri Krishna said: "O gopis! I am capable of instantly shattering mountains a hundred yojanas wide like a thunderbolt. I am capable of burning hundreds of villages in an instant like a spark of fire. Though you know Me, you are unable to recognize My power."

"O Gopis! What more shall I say to you? Whatever power exists within this vast universe, I can render all those powers exhausted in half a moment. Do not ever make Me the subject of your mockery."

The Gopis said: "O Prince! We have forgiven all your misdeeds because you are the son of the King of Vraja, and especially because you are a boy of childish intellect and ignorant. Otherwise, we would have shown you right now—to say nothing of Kamsa."

(now anxious about the loss of their goods): "Alas! What shall we do? When we set out for the Mathura market, our friends, gurus, husbands, sons, learned elders, and parents forbade us. We did not listen to them, and now we have received this consequence."

"What will those people say to us fools? How shall we show our faces? And how shall we look upon the faces of our elders whose lips will be swollen with rage?"

Sri Radha said: “O sakhis! When I set out from home to sell yogurt, my mother-in-law forbade me repeatedly. I came here having ignored her prohibition and have now received this result. I cannot say what state will befall me when I return home."

"O friends! You all know that Jatila is naturally prone to eyes reddened with rage; she rebukes me in many ways even without any fault. Given that, there is no telling what she will do upon finding the fault of wasting the goods. I can find no way out or remedy for this."

Brahma said: "O best of the dwija-munis! Thus deeply worried, Radha and the other Gopis were submerged in an ocean of anxiety, and the lotus-faces of all, once blooming, became pale. Seeing the sun leaning towards the peak of the western mountains, the gopis went to their respective homes with dejected hearts."

Thus ends the twenty-ninth chapter, titled "The Journey to Mathura," in the Sri Radha-Hridaya of the Paramahamsa Samhita of the Brahmanda Purana, composed by Vyasa, in the dialogue between Brahma and the seven Rishis.

Stutis, Mantras and Kavachas and Dhyanas from the Radha-hridaya

Guru Mantra:

ऐं गुरवे तुभ्यं नमः

Guru Dhyanam:

गुरुर्हि देवो भगवान् परात्मा सनातनः ।
तस्य ध्यानं प्रवक्ष्यामि समाहितमनाः शृणु ॥

तुषारकुन्दशङ्खेन्दु वरस्फटिकसन्निभं ।
प्रसन्नात्तेरुहप्रख्य वदनं चारुहासितं ॥

सुवान्धक्शि कपोलभ्रू लसद्दन्तौष्ठाधरं ।
प्रसन्नारुण पाथोज पाददव्वन्द्व विराजितं ॥

कुण्डलोष्णीष विभ्राजद्धार केयूरमण्डितं ।
श्वेतस्रग्गन्धवस्त्रादि भूषितं निर्गुणात्मकं ॥

ब्रह्मज्योतिः स्वरूपञ्च भक्तानुग्रह विग्रह ।
दिशो वितिमिराः कुर्वन् तेजोराशिमिवोल्बणं ॥

जपाकुसुमसङ्काशं पट्टाम्बरभृताच्युत ।
भास्वद्भास्वत्सहस्राभ रक्तमाल्यानुलेपया ॥

ईषद्धास्यारुणास्याढ्य चर्वत्ताम्बुलरक्तया ।
स्वशक्त्यालिङ्गितं वाम पार्श्वासनकृतागुरुं ॥

Guru Stuti:

नमोस्तु पाजोरुह पाद युग्मे ज्ञानान्धकाराणि सहस्रभानो ।
तत्त्वावबोधाज सहस्रभानवे नमोस्तुते दीपमहौजसे गुरो ॥

ब्रह्मप्रदालालस मानसार्णव प्रोत्स्फुल्ल पङ्केरुह दन्तपङ्क्तये ।
किरीटहाराङ्गद कुण्डलोल्लस स्वपुण्णते ते सुर पूज्यपाद ॥

शङ्खेन्दुभास प्रतिमान भासया दिशोन्धकारं तिरस्कृत्तमोनुदे ।
सहस्रभानु प्रतिबानुमानित तत्पादपाखोज वराय नाथ ॥

नमामितुभ्यं नमनीयपाद सरोरुहुद्वन्द्व गुरो प्रसीद ।
भक्तेश भक्तेष्ट वितारलालस स्वान्तप्रभो दीनदयापराय ते ॥

देवर्षिराजर्षि श्रुतर्षिसिद्ध महर्षि विप्रर्षिगणौघ पूज्य ।
सरोज सङ्काश पदाम्बुजाय ते नमस्तेतेगुह्य गुणौघयुक्त ॥

देवाप्सरो यक्ष पिशाच नागाः
विद्याधरादित्य मरुद्गणौघैः ।
समीढ्य पदाज वर प्रसीदतां स्वान्तान्धकार प्रति नाशनो भवान् ॥

स्फुटज्जबारक्ततया दिगन्तरं प्रकाशयन्त्या तनुभान भासया ।
नाथ स्वशक्त्या परिलिङ्ग्यमान शरीरते पाद युगं नमामि ॥

ब्रह्मप्रदाय मपबर्गवर्ष्य ब्रह्मेश विष्णीन्द्र कुबेरमुख्यैः ।
नतात्वि युग्माय प्रसन्नपाधो जनाङ्घ्रि युग्माय नमामितुभ्यं ॥

गुणातीताय गुणिने गुणग्राम प्रदाय च ।
सच्चिद्रूपाय शान्ताय परमानन्ददायिने ॥

योगेश योगगम्याय निष्फलायाक्रियाय ते ।
नमः पङ्कजनेत्राय वेदान्तोरुह भानवे ॥

नमोज्ञानान्धकाराय ज्ञानपाखोज भानवे ।
श्रुतिस्मृति पुराणेतिहास वेदान्त वेदकैः ।
मीमांसा आगममुख्यैश्च कथितात्मगुणाय ते ॥

यं प्रसादाल्लभेद्ब्रह्म सद्गतिं सन्मतिं रतिं ।
विकसत् पद्मवक्त्राय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

अज्ञान तिमिरध्वंस भानवे सच्चिदात्मने ।
ज्ञानपाथोज हंसाय ज्ञानदाय परात्मने ॥

ज्ञानबीजाय शुद्धाय सूक्ष्मरूपाय ते नमः ।
हिमकुन्देन्दु शङ्खाभ नमस्तेऽनन्तशक्तये ॥

नित्याय नित्यबोधाय नित्यज्ञान प्रदायिने ।
नित्यानित्य प्रबोधाय नित्यानित्य गुणाय ते ॥

सर्वाय सर्वरूपाय सर्वेश्वर नमोऽस्तुते ॥